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**AN ANTIDOTE**  
**FOR**  
**UNITARIANISM:**

**A**  
**COMPREHENSIVE DEFENCE OF**

**The Doctrine of the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ,  
the Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit,  
the original and total Depravity of Man.  
The necessity of the agency of the Spirit to Renew  
the Heart, the Substitution of Christ for  
his People, and Justification  
by his Righteousness.**

**ADAPTED TO THE CAPACITY OF ALL CLASSES OF READERS.**

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**BY JOHN RANKIN,**  
\* \*  
Author of "A Present to Families," and "Letters on  
American Slavery."

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## P R E F A C E .

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**THE present is pre-eminently a time of moral revolution. Long established systems are rapidly breaking up, and the cords that for ages bound great masses together are sundered, and new combinations are daily forming. During such a period there is, through the pride of intellect, and the love of novelty, peculiar danger of departing from long established truths, and embracing the grossest errors. Owing to the corruption of human nature mankind are ever prone to great extremes, either of rigor or laxity, in their principles. Hence, when men throw off the rigors of long established customs they are in danger of becoming extremely licentious. While a time of revolution is, in some respects, favorable to promoting truth, it also affords great facilities for the propagation of error. The present, then, is a time when the lovers**

of the truth should propagate it with renewed zeal and diligence.

It is a painful fact, that great numbers calling themselves Christians, deny the doctrines of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, the original and total depravity of man, the necessity of the agency of the Spirit to renew the heart, the substitution of Christ for his people, and justification by his righteousness. To stop the progress of errors so fatal in their tendencies is the object of the following work. Something in a new and concise form, adapted to all classes of readers, and afforded at little expence, is now needed. Unitarianism is advancing under different forms, and in various denominations; and in all its forms, it is a spiritual poison that pervades the head and the heart, produces derangement in all the moral system, and sooner or later, it will bring on the chills of the second death, unless its progress be arrested by the application of the truth—by the power of the Holy Ghost.

There are two classes of Unitarians. One hold Christ to be a mere man, commissioned

to be the Savior. These are called Socinians, from Socinus, a prominent propagator of their doctrines. The other class hold that Christ is the first and greatest being created—some say begotten—but not eternal, not God, except as the Father dwells in him. These are called Arians, from Arius, a distinguished propagator of their doctrines. Both classes alike deny the divinity of Christ, the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, and are alike Unitarians, so called, because they hold that there is but one person in the Godhead. They also deny the original and total depravity of man, the necessity of the agency of the Spirit to renew the heart, the substitution of Christ for his people, and justification by his righteousness.

A suitable work, defending, in small compass, the important doctrines they deny, put into every family that would receive it, would, to great extent, prevent the progress of the dangerous errors propagated by Unitarians.

Of the suitability of the following work to the end designed the christian public must judge. If they deem it in any good degree calculated to answer the end for which it has



been composed, it is hoped they will take a suitable interest in its circulation ; and, if they do not so deem it, it is desired that some one will undertake a work that will fill the place for which this is intended. It is important that every family should possess a small work on the subjects it embraces.

AN  
ANTIDOTE FOR UNITARIANISM.

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CHAPTER I.

GOD AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

OF all knowledge professed by rational beings, that which relates to the existence and perfections of God is the most important. He alone possesses that boundless perfection which can fully and forever satisfy the vast desires of immortal minds. Spiritual beings are constituted with capacities so immense that nothing short of uncreated excellence can render them happy. It is the effulgence of the divine perfections that lights up heaven, and fills its inhabitants with happiness unspeakable, and full of glory. And if fallen and benighted man is to be renovated, and made happy, it must be by a revelation of God and his glorious perfections. Nothing less than the unfolding of infinite excellence can illuminate this dark world, and elevate the sin-degraded souls of men. Man, stupid, and lost man, although surrounded by all the grand scenery of nature, and cheered by the amazing effulgence of the natural sun, blindly bows down and worships wood and stone. So deeply seated in his

immortal mind is the darkness of sin that all the splendors of nature have failed to dispel his blindness and elevate his soul. The sun, and the moon, and the stars, since the morning of creation, have shone in brightness and beauty; still whole nations are shrouded in the deepest moral darkness. A brighter sun than that which lights up this world must shine upon man, or he will wander on in darkness without end. Every thing short of divine revelation has failed to illuminate apostate men, and bring them back to God. He that made us, saw our necessities, and revealed to us himself and his boundless perfections. The sacred Scriptures were given to unfold to us God in his true character, and make us wise unto eternal life. Then with earnestness and delight we should study the sacred oracles to gain the knowledge indispensable to salvation. Then it is worthy of notice,

1. That although the existence of the universe is proof that God exists; yet it is from the sacred volume we learn that he is purely a spiritual being. Every thing to which we have access by our senses, is material and bears no resemblance to spirituality, and consequently, cannot convey to us the idea of spiritual existence. Although the heathen nations descended from ancestors favored with divine revelation, and might, by tradition, have some knowledge of spiritual beings, yet they attached the idea of materiality to even their

gods. The impression of materiality is made upon us so deeply, by every thing around us, that it is extremely difficult for us to form any conception of beings purely spiritual. Hence, there is reason to believe that we are indebted to the Scriptures for our knowledge of spiritual existences. It is from them we learn the important fact that "God is a spirit," John iv. 24. But for the knowledge of this fact, we might have been worshiping some material being instead of the true God.

2. Every thing around us has had a beginning, and therefore, the idea that every thing must have begun to exist, is so strongly impressed upon our minds, that it is exceedingly difficult to conceive of any thing existing without a beginning. There is nothing in creation calculated to impart to us the idea of eternal existence. The interesting fact that God is an eternal being, existing without beginning, and without end, is nowhere written but on the sacred page. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Psalm xc. 2. This is a glorious ray of the sun of righteousness sent forth to illuminate the moral world. Suns, and moons, and stars, with all their dazzling splendor, are less than feeble tapers at noon-day, when compared to him whose effulgence lights up vast eternity. Eternal existence is infinitely above the powers of reason. The mightiest intellect ever formed cannot fathom the endless depths of such existence. How

glorious and overwhelming is such a view of Deity! and how well is it calculated to fill our souls with admiration and holy devotion!

3. Every thing around us is liable to change. Mutability seems to be written on the whole face of creation. Were we to reason from what we see, we would, no doubt, come to the conclusion that God is a changeable being. From the mutability of creation we might infer the mutability of the creator. How dubious is the boasted light of nature! and how dear is the light of the sacred volume! "I *am* the Lord, I change not." Mal. iii. 6. God is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning." James i. 17. These declarations are in accordance with infinite perfection. How could infinite excellence change? Every change must be either for the better or the worse, and therefore necessarily implies imperfection. It is true that in the Scriptures God is said to repent; but this implies merely a change in his providences and dealings, which he always intended to make; but it implies no mental change; for in this respect "he is not man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent."

4. The mighty worlds that revolve around us, with all their vast trains of creatures, are evidences of God's immense power. Ancient philosophers, uninstructed by divine revelation, supposed that the world was formed of pre-existing atoms. They seem not to have en-

tertain<sup>ed</sup> the idea that there was an actual creation of something out of nothing. That matter was brought from non-entity into being by the power of God they deemed impossible. The Scriptures teach that creation was an actual production by the power of God; Heb. xi. 3: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." There were no pre-existing atoms out of which the worlds were made. They were called into existence by the word of God. "He spake and it was done—He commanded, and it stood fast." "God said, let there be light, and there was light." By his word the universe was lighted up. Such is the account the Scriptures give of God's power. He is the "Lord God Almighty." Rev. iv. 48. All holy intelligences are represented as rejoicing in his power, "saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Rev. xix. 6.

5. In the visible world nothing can occupy more than one place at a time, consequently, there is nothing in the system of nature to teach us the omnipresence of Deity. It is from the sacred oracles we learn with clearness the important truth that God is omnipresent. These teach us that he fills immensity, and of course, is in every place at the same time! "Behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee." 1 Kings viii. 27. "Whith-

er shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Psal. cxxxix. 7—10. "The eyes of the Lord *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Prov. xv. 3. Thus clearly is the important fact of God's omnipresence revealed; and in this respect, how incomprehensible is the divine nature! How grand, and how interesting is the idea of an Almighty being filling immensity, being, at the same instant, present in every part of his vast dominions, moving alike the floating atom and the massy world; sustaining, at every moment, with unabating energy, all the immense trains of his creatures, from the mightiest angel to the feeblest insect.

6. All creatures are limited in knowledge. They cannot even comprehend their own existence, much less can they comprehend how it is possible that a being should know and comprehend every thing past, present, and to come. The Scriptures reveal to us the fact that God is omniscient. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. "God knoweth all things." John iii. 20. "His understanding is infinite." Psal. cxlvii. 5. "Neither is there

any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. iv. 13. Such knowledge infinitely transcends the comprehension of finite beings. It is higher than the heavens, it is deeper than hell: the mightiest created intellect cannot ascend to its heights, or fathom its depths.

7. In the works of creation we have striking displays of God's wisdom. To be wise is to be capable of devising and employing the best means to accomplish important ends. He who devised the stupendous plan of creation, as a means of accomplishing great and important ends, must be immensely wise. The sacred oracles give us a still brighter display of divine wisdom in the glorious plan of redemption. In view of this we may with rapture exclaim "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" Rom. xi. 33. How amazing is the scheme of uniting the human and divine natures in the person of Jesus Christ. "Great is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. ii. 16. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John i. 14. Had the whole intelligent creation been summoned into one



council, and the momentous question been presented, how shall God be just, and be the justifier of guilty man? all must have failed to answer; the wisdom of the created universe could not have approached a solution of the astounding difficulty. The brightest seraph could not have originated the stupendous thought, that he whose effulgence lighted up heaven, and filled it with glory immense, should take upon him the degraded nature of man, in it, bear the punishment due to sin, and then wear it forever! O what amazing condescension! Nothing short of infinite wisdom could have devised and executed the plan of salvation. Holy beings will, to all eternity, look upon it as containing in it the fathomless depths of divine wisdom. And to "God only wise," they will ascribe endless glory.

8. In creation God has displayed his sovereignty in creating one being a man, another a beast, and another a crawling worm. He has made all his creatures according to his pleasure, and no one of them has a right to say to him "why hast thou made me thus?" The Scriptures teach us that he as a sovereign will do all his pleasure. Isa. xlii. 10: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Both in the natural and moral world he disposes of every thing as he will. The little sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice. He appoints every atom where to float, and where to rest. His providences ex-

tend to all his creatures, all their motions and exercises. Acts xvii. 28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." He dispenses and withholds his favors as he pleases, and every holy being is prepared to say, let it be so, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

9. On earth we have no examples of perfect holiness. While men exhibit some apparent good qualities they manifest a strong tendency to evil. We see in the same individual a wonderful mixture of good and evil tendencies. Consequently, were we to judge of Deity by the rational creatures he has made, we would likely conclude that he is partially good and partially evil. Were we, on this point, left to nature's light alone, sad would be our conclusions. We should doubtless fall into fundamental error with respect to the real character of God. The sacred volume teaches us that God is perfectly holy. Isa. vi. 3: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts." The holiness of God consists in the purity and rectitude of his nature. The divine nature is the standard of holiness. That fitness of things which exists in creation, and is recognized by the divine law as the standard of right among men, originated in the perfect will of God. He constituted that appropriate order of things, the violation of which is always wrong, and consequently, forbidden by the law of God. The idea that the law exists in the nature of

things independently of Deity, and that God himself, as well as his creatures, is bound by it, is an absurdity. Both the law and the relations it recognizes emanated from the perfect nature of God. He eternally exists an infinitely perfect being. The eternal and unchangeable tendency of his nature is to do right. His nature is so perfect that it is infinitely impossible that he should do wrong. His exercises are the results of infinite and unchangeable perfections. Hence God's holiness is infinitely above the holiness of creatures, whose perfections are finite and mutable.

Holiness includes truth, justice and benevolence. God's infinite regard to truth has been manifested in fulfilling his promises at infinite expense. To fulfil the promises made to his people, he delivered up his own Son to become man, and bear their sins "in his own body upon the tree." In doing this he gave the highest possible evidence of regard to truth. "He is not man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent."

In sending rebellious angels to endless perdition, God gave a striking manifestation of his regard to justice; but how immense was the exhibition of justice given in the death of his Son! When his own Son took the sinner's place, the Father did not spare him, but caused him to drink the dreadful cup of wrath justly due to sinners. The Son prayed in the anguish of his spirit, "O Father, if it be pos-

sible, let this cup pass from me;" but the Father did not let it pass from him. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." When he hung upon the bloody tree, enduring agonies inexpressibly great, the Father withdrew from him, and left him to endure the full demands of the broken law. O how dreadful were the sufferings the Son endured when he cried in loud, and doleful accents, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Thus the Father has given the highest possible evidence of his regard to justice by exacting it of his own Son, who took the sinner's place. Although he was an only begotten Son, infinitely beloved by the Father, and in himself, perfectly innocent, yet when he took our sins upon him, the Father exacted of him the full demands of justice.

In creating creatures, and providing for them according to their necessities, God has manifested to great extent the benevolence of his nature. Creation abounds with evidences of God's goodness. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." But in the gift of his Son there is still greater evidences of his benevolence. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. This was love to enemies, and love at infinite expense. From love, or benevolence, flows

goodness to the innocent and mercy to the guilty. Benevolence is so prominent in Deity that the Scriptures declare that "God is love." All the perfections of God are exercised in perfect accordance with infinite benevolence. In all his vast plans of creation, providence and grace, the end is the exhibition of his own glory for the greater happiness of holy beings.

The Scriptures then reveal to us a God who is purely a spirit, eternal, unchangeable, almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, infinitely wise; a sovereign, doing all his pleasure; so perfect in his nature, that it is infinitely impossible that he should do wrong, and who has displayed his truth, justice and benevolence at infinite expense. How incomprehensible and glorious is the being revealed in the sacred oracles as the true God, the everlasting Jehovah, the creator, the upholder, and governor of all things. Such a being alone is worthy to be at the helm of universal empire, and to do all his pleasure; under his control all things are infinitely safe. To him we may cheerfully commit our temporal and eternal interests. He is worthy of our highest love and confidence, and we ought ever to be able to say with all our hearts, "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And most ardently should we unite with enraptured seraphs in exclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts,"—"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth

upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT GOD EXISTS IN A PLURALITY OF PERSONS.

THAT there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, is, by some, believed to be incredible, because incomprehensible. But among finite beings there is but little that can, in every respect, be comprehended. We cannot so much as comprehend our own existence, much less can we comprehend the existence of Deity. That God exists in three persons is no more incomprehensible than that he exists eternally, without beginning and without end. There is no one perfection in Deity that we can fully comprehend. God is an incomprehensible being, and therefore, incomprehensibility must be involved in every fact revealed in relation to him. If the Scriptures involved nothing incomprehensible, in describing an infinite being, we should have the most decisive evidence that they were not a divine revelation. Finite minds cannot comprehend such a being. We are not, then, on the ground of incomprehensibility, to reject any fact revealed in the sacred volume.

The existence of three persons in one God

involves no contradiction. They are three in one sense and one in another sense. These three persons are one God, but not one person. God is three in personality, and one in divinity.

The term person means an intelligent agent, or actor. Every person is an intelligent agent or actor, that is, one that acts intelligently and distinctly from others. When we apply the term person to Deity, we must make allowance for the difference between the nature of God and that of man. A human person acts intelligently, and so does a divine person—in this respect there is a point of likeness; but a divine person is infinitely above a human person. Each is a person; but one is a finite, the other an infinite person. The Scriptures teach that God exists in a plurality of persons: the sacred volume opens with this doctrine. In the very first sentence of inspiration the name of God is plural. Gen. i. 1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Hebrew word translated God is plural. This plurality in name was, no doubt, intended to designate a plurality of persons. That three persons operated in creating the universe is clearly revealed. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." John i. 1. 3. This proves that the Father and Son were present,

and it is expressly said that the Spirit was active in creating the world. Gen. i. 2: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Job. xxvi. 13: "By his Spirit he garnished the heavens." The Hebrew word translated creator, is plural. Eccles. xii. 1: "Remember now thy creator." This implies that there was a plurality of persons operating in creation; hence they are called, in the Hebrew Scriptures, creators. Thus the fact is clearly revealed that Father, Son, and Spirit were present in creating the heavens and the earth. They were also present in creating man. Gen. i. 26: "Let US make man in OUR image after OUR likeness." Gen. iii. 22: "Behold, the man is become as ONE of US."—"US, OUR, ONE of US," were doubtless used in accordance with facts, and not in accordance with the custom of princes, before any princes were created, as some suppose. The Father, Son and Spirit were present in these transactions, and therefore the terms "US, OUR, ONE of US," were appropriate, and used in a natural sense. Were these the only intimations of a plurality of persons in Deity, given in the Old Testament, there might be some reason to doubt; but when three divine persons have distinctly since been revealed, there can be no room for reasonable doubt.

The Father and the Son are distinctly mentioned at the same time. Prov. xxx. 4:



“Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the winds in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son’s name, if thou canst tell?” This passage reveals the fact that the Father has a Son.

The Psalmist teaches the same truth. Psal. ii. 7—12: “The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.—Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings—kiss the Son lest he be angry.” In this place the Father and Son are distinctly mentioned as two intelligent agents. The Father promises the Son an inheritance, and advises the kings of the earth to seek his favor.

In the Old Testament the Spirit is also clearly revealed. To prove this a few out of the many passages that might be presented will be sufficient. Job. xxxiii. 4: “The Spirit of God made me.” Isa. lxiii. 10: “But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit.—Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him?” Thus the Holy Spirit is mentioned as an intelligent agent capable of creating man, and of being vexed by the rebellion of Israel. This proves that the Spirit is a real person and not a mere quality in Deity.

Isa. xlviii. 16: “The Lord God and his

Spirit sent me." Or as some translate it, "the Lord God hath sent his Spirit and me." The meaning seems to be that the Father sent the Son and Spirit.

The several passages above presented show clearly that the Old Testament Scriptures reveal the fact that God exists in Father, Son and Spirit.

The New Testament Scriptures assume the same fact without explanation, or any intimation of its being either a new doctrine or a new revelation. Luke speaks of the Holy Spirit just as did the writers of the Old Testament, and presents him as a being in whose existence the Jews believed. Luke i. 15. 35. 41: "And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." "And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." The word translated Ghost should have been rendered Spirit. The word Ghost means the same as the word Spirit. Isaiah says that Israel vexed the "Holy Spirit," and Luke says "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." Thus the New Testament perfectly accords with the Old in relation to the Holy Spirit.

Peter speaks of the Son just as he was revealed in the Old Testament. Matt. xvi. 16: "And Simon Peter answered, and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Daniel calls him Messiah, that is, anointed, or Christ. Dan. ix. 25, 26. Messiah is from the

Hebrew, and Christ from the Greek, both signify anointed. Both Testaments then call him the Christ, or the Anointed, and both call him the Son of God. In the Old he is called the Anointed, and the Son of God, and in the New he is called the Anointed, and the Son of God. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The high priest used similar language. Mark xiv. 61: "Art the Christ, the Son of the Blessed." He seems to have understood that the Messiah or Christ was also the Son of the Blessed, that is, the Son of God.

John says, "these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." He speaks of the Savior just as the Old Testament writers did, as being both Messiah, and the Son of God.

The New Testament writers call the Father God just as the Old did. Thus there is a remarkable accordance in the language of the two Testaments in relation to the existence of God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

At the baptism of the Savior the Spirit descended upon him, and the Father spoke from heaven, "saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matth. iii. 16, 17. Three persons, or intelligent agents, are here represented as acting their several parts. The Father acted, the Son acted, and the Spirit acted, and each a separate part. Hence, the idea of three persons, or intelligent agents, is

clearly conveyed, and that by indubitable facts, in view of which, it is impossible that any opposite idea should enter the mind. No one can read the passage without receiving the impression of three distinct agents or actors.

The same impression is made by the formula of baptism. Matth. xxviii. 19: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In view of this, no one can avoid receiving the impression of three persons. And as baptism is an act of worship, and a consecration to the service of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, an impression of the equality of these persons, or agents, is forced upon the mind, whenever the formula is repeated in the administration of that sacred ordinance. If any disbelieve that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that the three are equal, they must do it against the natural impressions which this sacred text forces upon the mind.

The same impressions are forced upon us by another remarkable passage. 1 John v. 7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," that is, one divinity. The genuineness of this text has been disputed, because it has been left out in some ancient manuscripts; but this is no proof that it is not a part of the sacred oracles. A transcriber might omit a text, by inadvertency, without

design, but no one could, without designing it, forge a text, and insert it in the sacred volume; nor is there reason to believe that such a forgery could take place without detection. There is much less reason to suppose a forgery, than an omission through the want of sufficient carefulness in transcribing. The text in doctrine and style bears upon it the impress of John. There is no good reason to doubt its genuineness. But if any persist in denying that this text is genuine, they may in other passages find ample proof of the doctrine it contains.

A text of equal force is found in Heb. ix. 14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God." The SON, through the ETERNAL SPIRIT, offered himself to GOD. It is impossible that language should convey more forcibly the idea of three persons, and that they are divine. The ETERNAL SPIRIT must be God, and consequently, equal to God the Father, to whom the Son offered himself. It is admitted that the Father is God, the Son is called God. The Father himself says to the Son, "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. i. 8. The Spirit is called God. Acts v. 3, 4. There are, then, Father, Son and Spirit, and each of them is called God. In the language of Scripture, the Father is God, the Son

is God, and the Spirit is God; and yet they are but one God. "These three are one." There is a sense in which they are certainly three, and another in which they are as certainly one. They are three persons, or intelligent agents, and these persons are one in nature or divinity, and constitute but one God. The Father is God, but not independently of the Son and Spirit. The Son is God, but not independently of the Father and Spirit. The Spirit is God, but not independently of the Father and Son. The Father does nothing without the Son, and the Son can do nothing without the Father, and the Spirit can do nothing without the Father and the Son. God is independent of his creatures, but is dependent on himself. In himself must be the resources of his action, and of his happiness. As a social being the resources of his happiness must be in the plurality of his persons. The infinitely excellent society necessary to the perfect happiness of an infinite being must be in himself, for it cannot be in his creatures. Thus a plurality of persons seems to be essential to the independence and happiness of Deity; and thus the doctrine of the Trinity, though purely one of revelation, is in accordance with the dictates of reason. It is a dictate of reason that society is essential to the happiness of a social being. God is doubtless a social being, at least reason would teach us that he is such, for he has diffused the social

principle to great extent among his creatures. And shall not he that made the eye see? And shall not he who is the author of the social principle possess it in his own nature? And if God be a social being, reason teaches that a plurality of perfectly equal persons is essential to form that infinitely excellent society necessary to his perfect happiness. The Son, under the name of wisdom, seems to refer to this society. Prov. viii. 22, 23. 30: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Then was I *as* one brought up *with him*; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." The Son was set up from everlasting. There never was a time when the Son was not set up. He was by the Father as one brought up with him, that is, his equal in age. He was daily the Father's delight, and always rejoiced in the Father's presence. In accordance with this, the Son prays, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John xvii. 5. This shows that the glory and happiness of the Son was from eternity in the enjoyment of the Father. There was infinitely glorious society between the Father and the Son in the endless depths of eternity, and no doubt the Holy Spirit was with the Father and the Son in this infinitely pure and glorious

society. The Savior, then, has revealed the fact, that the persons of the Godhead do have glorious society in the enjoyment one of another.

Still, some will assert, that such three persons must be three Gods. But reason and revelation unite in teaching that they are but one God. According to most obvious principles of reason, it must be admitted, that three intelligent agents, in the same nature, equally and infinitely wise, powerful and good, would always judge and act in the most perfect unity; and, consequently, that the adoption of discordant plans of operation and government would be as impossible as their nature is perfect. Thus reason teaches that there is as much unity in the three, as there could be in one; and that they are as perfectly one creator, one governor of the universe, and one God, as one such person could be. Revelation confirms the voice of reason, by declaring that "these three are one." Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God *is* one Lord." Thus, while the Scriptures teach that there are Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equally divine, and alike called God, they also teach that these three are one God, and most firmly deny the existence of any but one God.

The true God, then, exists in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and, of course, they who do not worship him as such, do not worship the God revealed in the Scriptures, and cannot



reasonably expect to partake of the salvation tendered to lost sinners. This salvation depends upon the facts that there is a Father who gave his Son to die for men, that there is a Son who did die for them, and that there is a Holy Spirit who regenerates and sanctifies them. If these facts be not true, there is no salvation! Deep, and dark, and fraught with terrors, is all that lies beyond the grave! Gloom, hopeless and eternal, must settle upon the immortal mind! But glory be to God in the highest, these facts are true. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Son did come and die, that fallen men might live, and the Holy Spirit is sent forth to regenerate and sanctify those who are "dead in trespasses and sins." And all nations shall finally see the salvation of God—the good tidings shall be carried to the ends of the earth, and great joy "shall be unto all people."

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### CHAPTER III.

**THE SON IS GOD, AND EQUAL TO THE FATHER IN ALL DIVINE PERFECTIONS.**

THE final destiny of every man will be determined according to the honor or dishonor he shall have given to the Son of God. And,

therefore, to understand his true character, as it is necessary to giving him appropriate honor, must be of infinite importance.

Some believe that the Son is the first and greatest being, created or begotten, but not eternal, not "very God;" that the Father alone is "very God," and dwells in the Son so as to constitute him God, the Mighty God, even Jehovah, and the object of divine worship.

Others believe that the Son is fully equal to the Father in nature and perfection, and, consequently, is "very God," in the same sense in which the Father is, and therefore the proper object of divine worship.

The first deny the eternal existence of the Son, his natural equality with the Father, and represent him merely as a constituted God. The latter assert his eternal existence, his full equality with the Father, and that he is God in nature and perfection. Hence the opinions of these two classes are infinitely opposite, and therefore cannot both be true. One of them must necessarily be fatally false; for, "*he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father.*" And it must be admitted, that if a man honor not the Father, he cannot possibly be saved. Hence, to be right in the question before us, is infinitely important! Upon a just decision hangs our eternal destiny. O let the weight of eternity press from our minds every vestige of prepossession and prejudice! and for the all important decision, let us, with hu-

mility and prayer, go to the word of God, that fountain of truth, from which a truly humble soul never departed fatally wrong.

In order to a fair decision of the question before us, we think it proper, in the first place, to examine the most prominent part of the testimony which is supposed to prove that the Son is the first and greatest being created or begotten, but not eternal, not "very God;" that he is constituted God, and the object of worship, by the Father dwelling in him.

The first testimony we shall notice, is a class of Scriptures which are, by some, believed to prove that the Son is the first and greatest being created or begotten, but not eternal, not "very God."

Rev. iii. 14: He is "the beginning of the creation of God." Heb. i. 6: "The first begotten." Col. i. 15: "The first born of every creature." In a great variety of passages he is called "the Son of God," "the only begotten Son," and "the only begotten of the Father."

In relation to his being "the beginning of the creation of God," we need but just remark, that the first being created, is the effect of the beginning, and not the beginning itself. The beginning of creation is the divine energy exercised in the production of the first created being. The Son possessed and exercised that energy, and for that reason is called "the beginning of the creation of God;" "for by

him were all things created." Col. i. 16. "And without him was not any thing made that was made." John i. 3. Consequently, he could not have been the first being created unless he created himself.

The terms "first begotten" and "first born," express the idea that the Savior existed as the Son of God before creation. He was begotten, or born, before "every creature," for by him were all things created. Hence, he cannot be a creature.

The term "only begotten Son," now demands our attention. We will not trouble you at present with the controversies which have existed in relation to the application of this term. We believe it is safest to understand the language of the Scriptures in its most obvious and natural sense. The term "only begotten Son," expresses a relation among men of so high a nature, that every such Son is perfectly man. The Eternal Father has revealed to us that he has an "only begotten Son," and the natural idea is, that this Son is as perfectly God as a man's son is perfectly man. If the Father have a beginning, the Son must have a beginning. If the Father be a creature, the Son must be a creature; but if the Father be eternal, without beginning, the Son must be eternal, without beginning. If the Father be God, the Son must be God. Hence, if the Savior be not eternal, he is not equal to the Father in point of nature, and of course, cannot

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be the only begotten Son of God; for every such son is equal to his father in nature. The Father never had a beginning, either of existence or exercise. Hence, the idea of his having an eternal Son is perfectly consistent with his nature.\*

The conclusion is, that the Scriptures, now considered, do most decidedly prove, that the Son is uncreated and eternal, and is as perfectly God as a man's son is perfectly man.

Let us now consider another class of Scriptures which, by some, are supposed to prove that the Son is not "very God."

The Father is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. xi. 31. And "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. i. 17. "God, *even*" his "God—annointed" him "with the oil of gladness." Heb. i. 9. The Son prays frequently to his Father. One specimen is sufficient. "O my Father, if it be

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\* Some contend, that as a man's son cannot be as old as his father, so the Son of God cannot be as old as his Father. But such seem to forget that it is the nature of man to have a beginning, and the nature of God to have no beginning. As man has a beginning of existence, so he must have a beginning of exercise; and, consequently, his son, as a result of his exercise, cannot be as old as himself. But God had no beginning of existence, and, of course, had no beginning of exercise; consequently, his Son may be, and to be his natural Son necessarily must be, as old as himself. If he is not as old as the Father, he is not in the nature of the Father, and, consequently, cannot be the natural Son of the Father.

possible, let this cup pass from me." Matth. xxvi. 39. He is the servant of the Father. Isaiah xlii. 1. Matth. xii. 18. He was sent to do the will of the Father, John vi. 38. "The Son can do nothing of himself." John v. 19. He knows nothing of himself. "Of that day and of *that* hour knoweth no man—neither the Son, but the Father." Mark xiii. 32. "The Father—sheweth him all things that himself doeth." John v. 20. The "Father hath taught" him, John viii. 28. He "speaketh the words of God." John iii. 34. The Son has nothing of himself. "The Father—hath given all things into his hands." John iii. 35. Even "all power—in Heaven and in earth." Matth. xxviii. 18. He says himself, "my Father is greater than I." John xiv. 28. And the kingdom which he received of the Father, he shall deliver up to him with subjection, "that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

In illustration of the first of these passages, we observe that the Father sustains two relations to the Son; the one, of a father, and the other of a God. He is both "the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This supposes the Son to have two natures—one divine, and the other created. And that he has these natures seems evident from the fact, that he is, in the sacred oracles, called both God and man. That he has a divine nature, of which God is the Father, we now take for granted, and proceed to show that he has a

complete human nature. In 1 Tim. ii. 5. he is called "the man Christ Jesus." He had a real body. Hebrews x. 5: "A body hast thou prepared me." And he had a real soul,—Matthew xxvi. 38: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Isaiah liii. 10: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." His mental powers increased, during minority, like those of another child. Luke ii. 40. 52: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.—And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature." "For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Heb. ii. 16. 17. "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin." Heb. iv. 15.

These passages make it as evident, as it is possible for language to make it, that the Savior had a complete humanity, a soul and body just like those of any other son of Abraham; "but without sin." Consequently, with respect to his humanity, God is as really his God as he is that of any other man. Hence, he prays like another man; and for this reason the Father is called "the God of our Lord Je-

sus Christ," who, nevertheless, may be, in divine nature, fully equal with the Father.

In relation to the servitude of the Son, we remark, that as man, he was naturally the servant of the Father, and even as divine, he was officially such. For the redemption of man he voluntarily became a servant. Heb. x. 9: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." This official and voluntary servitude implies no inferiority of nature, else our Lord was inferior to the disciples in nature when he washed their feet.

This servitude of our compassionate Savior, instead of detracting from his original excellence, reflects one of the brightest glories of his divine nature, and one that will sweeten the notes of heavenly song to endless ages. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9. O, it is astonishing grace! When angels behold him stooping from the summits of uncreated glory to the manger, they swell their song, and touch the sweetest, highest note. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Angels never saw so much of God before.

As a servant he came down from Heaven to do the will of his Father, and for that reason he could do nothing of himself. He was too holy to violate the will of his Father.

There is another sense in which he could do



nothing of himself. If he be equal to the Father, it is impossible that he and the Father should act in opposition, the one to the other. Hence, the Father has done nothing either in creation or redemption without the Son. He created all by the Son, and he redeems all by the Son; and the Son has done nothing without the Father.

As a servant, he knows nothing but the will of his Father, who annointed him, "with the oil of gladness, to preach good tidings to the meek;" and gave him the spirit beyond the measure of other prophets. In this sense he is taught of the Father; but the Father did not reveal to him, as a prophet, the day in which he would inflict judgment on Jerusalem. For this reason the Son is said not to know "of that day." That this is the true interpretation is evident from the fact, that other parts of Scripture represent the Son as knowing all things. John i. 25: "He knew what was in man." And Peter addresses him as one who knew the secrets of all hearts, John xxi. 17: "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." We know he is to be the judge of the world; and how could he judge the secrets of men if he were not omniscient? The Son, in becoming a servant, although he was infinitely rich, became poor; so that he had nothing of himself. But in order that he might perform his important work, and that while he appeared in the form of a servant, the

intelligent universe might not mistake his real character, "the Father hath given all things into his hands" even "all power—in Heaven and in earth," "that in him should all fulness dwell," "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And "the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all *men* should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." Thus, while the Son appears in the humble form of a servant, the Father supports his original dignity by exalting him to the helm of the universe, and by making him the fountain of fulness from which all the vast trains of his creatures are supplied, and by giving him a "name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In this way the Father has secured to the Son the honor due to his divine nature while he acts as the servant of the Father. And to sustain and exercise such power and authority require as much divinity as to give them. None but uncreated excellence could bestow them, and nothing short of this could sustain and exercise them when bestowed. Hence, even in this appears the equality of the Son with the Father.

When the Son shall have accomplished the great work of redemption, and "put down all rule, and all authority and power," his official

servitude shall terminate in delivering "up the kingdom to God, even the Father." This shall be the last and most conspicuous act of his official subjection to his Father. All creation shall first be put in subjection to the Son, as Mediatorial King, and then the Son himself shall be most manifestly subject to the Father in the act of delivering up the kingdom to him, and this act shall forever terminate his official subjection. Then shall he enter into that original kingdom of glory and equality, which he had with the Father before the world was, "that God may be all in all." Hence, the Father says to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. i. 8.

We will further remark, that the passage cannot mean, as some suppose, that, after delivering up the kingdom, the Son will become subject or obedient, as though he had before been disobedient, or not subject to the Father. But let the passage mean what it may, it is certain that the Son shall reign as "God—for ever and ever." As the Father reigns as God, while the Son holds the Mediatorial kingdom, so the Son, after he shall have delivered it up, will reign "God—for ever and ever."

Finally, the preceding remarks show what the Savior means when he says, "My Father is greater than I." As man, and as the official servant of the Father, he is inferior to him; but in divine nature and original perfection, he possesses full equality with him.

We will yet examine one other class of Scriptures, which are supposed to prove that the Son is not "very God."

1 Cor. viii. 6: "But to us *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*" John v. 26: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Heb. i. 2: "By whom also he made the worlds."

From these passages some infer that the Father alone is God, being the fountain of life to the Son and all things else; and that the Son is a created instrument, by which the Father created the worlds.

In order to show the true meaning of these Scriptures, and that the inference thus drawn from them is not just, we state, that the word of God does teach us that there are in Deity "Father—Son, and Holy Ghost." Matth. xxviii. 19. The Son is called "God." Heb. i. 8. The Holy Ghost is called, "the Eternal Spirit." Heb. ix. 14. and "God." Acts v. 3, 4. And yet the Sacred Oracles declare there is but one God.

Each of these three, is represented as an intelligent agent. Heb. ix. 14: "Christ,—through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." John v. 7: "For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and

these three are one;”\* that is, they are one divinity. In these passages, and a vast number more that might be quoted, the agency of each of three is plainly expressed. The Father acts, the Son acts, and the Holy Ghost acts. The Father is called God, the Son is called God, and the Holy Ghost is called God. And yet they are but one God. I am aware that this doctrine is considered unreasonable. But we ought always to be humble enough to let the word of God guide our reason. Submission to the dictates of revelation is one of the truest marks of reason. It is, however, not true that reason is against us. In all rational creatures the social principle does appear.— And would not reason draw from this fact the plain inference, that He who so widely diffused the principle throughout creation, must himself possess it to infinite perfection? And would not another plain inference be, that a plurality of equal persons in the Deity would be necessary to consummate infinite happiness in the full exercise of this principle? Finite beings cannot add to the happiness of God. The eternal resources of his infinite and unchangeable happiness must be in himself.

Again, it is urged, that three infinitely excellent persons or intelligent agents, would

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\* If any are disposed to dispute the genuineness of this text, the one associated with it is sufficient for our purpose.

constitute three Gods. But this is opposed both to the voice of reason and revelation. According to the most obvious principles of reason, it must be admitted, that three intelligent agents, in the same nature, equally and infinitely wise, powerful and good, would always judge and act in the most perfect unity; so that the adoption of discordant plans of operation and government would be as impossible as their nature is perfect. Hence, it is said, that "what things soever," the Father "doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." John v. 19. Not that the Father does some things, and the Son does other things like them; but the Son does the very same things the Father does. Thus, there is as much unity of action in the three as there could be in one, and they are as perfectly one Creator, one Governor of the universe, and one God, as one such person could be. Hence, it appears, that reason unites with revelation in attesting that Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are but one God. Now, though the Son and Spirit are each in nature equal to the Father, yet they have official service to perform in effecting the redemption of man. The Son is sent by the Father, and the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son, and, therefore, it is sometimes necessary to speak of the several persons according to their official characters, and not according to their absolute nature. By mutual choice the Father acts as God absolutely, and the Son and Spirit

as official servants of the Father. For this reason the Father is called God, in an absolute sense, while the Son and Spirit are mentioned in their official characters. Hence, it is said, "To us *there is but one* God, the Father—and one Lord Jesus Christ." But, if calling the Father God, in an absolute sense, will prove that the Son is not "very God," we may, in the same way, prove that the Father is not "very God;" for the Son is called God in an absolute sense. Rom. ix. 5: "Christ—is over all, God blessed forever." "The mighty God, the everlasting Father." Isa. ix. 6.

But the Father is not only called God in an absolute sense, but is represented as the source of all being, and even as giving life to the Son, "by whom also he made the worlds." And this is all consistent, if he be indeed the Father of the Son. But it should be noticed, that he has given to the Son to have life as he has it in himself, that is, to have it eternally, or without beginning; for so the Father has it in himself. Thus, while the text asserts that the Father hath given to the Son to have life, it asserts it in such a manner as fully proves that the Son is eternal as the Father. And this is by no means unreasonable; for if the Father had no beginning of being, of course, he had no beginning of exercise; consequently, was able to give the Son life without beginning, as he had it in himself.

That the Son was not a created instrument

of the Father in creation, is evident from the facts, that all things were created of nothing, and that a created instrument cannot operate upon nothing. But we have still a more sure word of testimony, "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the Lord that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." Isa. xlv. 24. Thus, the Lord declares he was alone in creating the universe, and denies all instrumental assistance.

We shall now consider a class of Scriptures which are supposed to prove that the Father, by dwelling in the Son, constitutes his divinity, and renders him the object of divine worship, and confers upon him the titles of "God—the mighty God, and the everlasting Father, and even Jehovah."

Col. ii. 9: "In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily." 2 Cor. v. 19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." 1 Tim. iii. 16: "God was manifest in the flesh." John xiv. 9. 10: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father—Believest thou that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?"

We readily admit that the Father dwells in the Son; but there is no evidence that the indwelling of the Father constitutes him God, and the object of divine worship. The Son is in the Father; but who would say that the



indwelling of the Son constitutes his divinity, and renders him the object of worship? He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father; because the Son is the "express image of" the Father's person, through which the Father is seen, Heb. i. 3. Any one may easily see that the express image of the Father's person is not the Father's person. We further remark, that if the indwelling of the Father constitutes the divinity of the Son, every Christian has this kind of divinity in the fullest sense; for both the Father and the Son dwell in every Christian. John xvii. 23: "I in them, and thou in me." John xiv. 23: "And we will make our abode with him." But who would worship a Christian, and call him God, the mighty God, "and even Jehovah?"

*Finally*, God and the Lamb are distinctly worshiped at the same time. Rev. v. 13: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." This shows, most unquestionably, that the Father and the Son are, at the same time, distinctly, and equally, the objects of divine worship, which supposes them equal in divinity. We have now carefully examined the most prominent part of the testimony which has been adduced in support of the opinion that the Son is the first and greatest being created or begotten, but not eternal, not "very God;" that the Fa-

ther alone is "very God," and dwells in the Son, so as to constitute him God, the mighty God, "even Jehovah," and the object of divine worship. We find not, in all, one text, when fairly interpreted, to support this opinion; but, that the testimony, as a whole, most decidedly supports the sentiment, that the Son is uncreated, eternal, and fully equal to the Father in nature and perfection, and is, in reality, "very God."

We are now prepared to select and examine testimony in support of the opinion, that the Son is fully equal to the Father in nature and perfection, and, consequently, is "very God," in the sense in which the Father is, and, therefore, the proper object of divine worship,—Psalm ii. 7: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Prov. xxx. 4: "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" John iii. 16: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish." Matth. xvi. 16: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Here we see that the Old and New Testaments unitedly testify that Christ is the Son, the only begotten Son of God, and, of course, that he is in the nature of the Father.

The only difficulty in the testimony arises from the expression, "This day have I begotten thee." Some suppose this expression applicable to the Savior's miraculous conception,

and others to his resurrection; but the apostle Paul seems to be of quite a different opinion. In Hebrews i. 5. he adduces this passage to prove that our Lord is superior to the angels. But his superiority over the angels does not arise either from his conception, or his resurrection from the dead. Hence, neither of these can be intended by the expression, "This day have I begotten thee." Other parts of Scripture show that eternity was the day in which the Son was begotten. Heb. i. 6: "When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Col. i. 15: "The first born of every creature." Hence, he was begotten and born before every creature. And Paul gives as evidence of this, that "By him were all things created." His work of creation is evidence that he was begotten and born before time. Hence, eternity was the day in which he was begotten.

The passage from Proverbs shows that the Son's name is incomprehensible like that of the Father. By name, is evidently meant nature. The mere name of God is known to all who have a divine revelation, but his nature is incomprehensible. None "by searching can find out the Almighty unto perfection." The conclusion is, that the Son possesses the same incomprehensible nature with the Father.

In support of this point we have yet more testimony. Exod. xxiii. 20. 21: "Behold, I

send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him—for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." This angel was Christ. 1. Cor. x. 9: "Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." He inflicted judgments upon them, and would not pardon their transgressions, for the name, that is, the nature of God was in him.

Phil. ii. 6, 7: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But—took upon him the form of a servant." The form of a servant which the Son took upon him was, as we have shown, a complete human nature. Hence, the word *form*, in this place, signifies nature. He took upon him the nature of a servant. His being in the form of God was the reason why he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But nothing short of his being in the nature of God could be a just reason for his thinking himself equal with God. Hence, the conclusion meets us irresistibly, that he is in the nature of the Father. If he had not been in the nature of God he would have been a servant, and, consequently, could not have taken upon him the form of a servant.

We further remark, that nothing can be gained by changing the translation. The apostle's purpose in the contrast between the form of God and the form of a servant, fixes his mean-

ing. Nothing short of the idea of full equality with God will suit his purpose of exhibiting Christ as a perfect example of humility. For any being who was not in the very nature of God, to have thought it not robbery to be equal with God, would have been the highest degree of presumption and arrogance. But let the idea of the Son's full equality in nature with the Father be admitted, and you have an example of infinite humility.

Col. i. 15: "Who is the image of the invisible God." Heb. i. 3: "Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person."

It will be granted by all, that the image of a spirit does not consist in form or shape, but in spirituality and perfection. And of these, in an express image, or exact likeness, there must be an equal degree with that of the spirit of which it is the image. Consequently, if the Father be spiritual in his existence, so must the Son be, as his express image. If the Father be a person, so the Son, as his express image, must be a person. And that the Son possesses spirituality, and that he is a person or intelligent agent, will be denied by few.

Again, if the Father be from eternity, or without beginning, so must the Son be, as his "express image." Let us now examine the divine testimony in favor of this conclusion, Prov. viii. 22, 23, 24. 30: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before

his works of old;" "I was set up from everlasting—I was by him as one brought up with him. I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Micah. v. 2: His "goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." John i. 1, 2, 3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Col. i. 17: "And he is before all things." Rev. xxii. 13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

This testimony supports our conclusion with united energy. The Father possessed the Son in the beginning of his way, before creation, and, of course, his eternal way; for the Son "was set up from everlasting," that is, he was eternally set up. There never was a time when the Son was not set up; for he was by the Father as one brought up with him, or his equal in age, "rejoicing always before him." His "goings forth," like those of the Father, were "of old, from everlasting." He was in the beginning "God—with God;" the creator of all things, "and before all things;" "the first and the last," as is "the Lord of hosts." Isaiah xlv. 6: "I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside *me there is no God.*" Hence, nothing can be more evident than that the Son is from eternity, or without beginning, as is the Father.

We remark, in this connexion, that the Father is almighty, and, therefore, the Son, to be his express image, must be almighty. In support of this we present the following testimony. Psalm cii. 24, 25, 26: "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the Heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed." According to Heb. i. 10, 11, 12, the Son is called that God who laid the foundation of the earth. In Isaiah ix. 6, the Son is called "the mighty God. John says, "all things were made by him;" John i. 2. Paul says, "by him were all things created." Col. i. 16. And he upholds "all things by the word of his power." Heb. i. 3. It is needless to multiply testimony on this point. The old and new testament Scriptures unite in declaring that the Son of God is omnipotent. Vast creation is the product of his power; his energy alike sustains the floating atom, and the massy world.

The Father is omniscient, and so must the Son be, as his express image: and we may add, that by the Son "were all things created." Col. i. 16. He governs all things: Isaiah ix. 6. He upholds all things: Heb. i. 3. He is the judge of all things: John v. 22. "The Fa-

ther—hath committed all judgment to the Son.” Consequently, he must know all things: this conclusion is attested by Peter in the plainest terms; John xxi. 17: “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.” As the heart-searching God, “He knew what was in man.” His knowledge is infinite, extending to the perfect comprehension of his Father’s nature. John x. 15: “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.”

The Son, as the express image of the Father, must be omnipresent. As creator, upholder, governor, and judge of the universe, his agency and presence must be universal: hence, he assures his disciples that “Where two or three are gathered together in” his “name, there” is he “in the midst of them.” Matth. xviii. 20.

The same may be said in relation to all other divine perfections. The Son, to be the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person, must possess them all to a full equality with him. Any thing that is not eternal in existence, and boundless in perfection, is infinitely less than God; and, consequently, cannot be the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person. The conclusion is inevitable. The Son possesses the same nature with the Father, and is equal to him in perfection.

Hence, he is equally with the Father, the object of divine worship. To honor the Son



as we honor the Father, while we believe him to be infinitely less than the Father, is impossible. Sooner might we honor, as Washington, the vilest drunkard that wallows like a beast in the streets, or the midnight assassin who sheds the blood of unsuspecting innocence. The angel and the worm are alike distant from Deity in point of nature. And the worshipers of angels and worms are alike idolaters—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matth. iv. 10. John fell down to worship the angel: Rev. xxii. 8, 9: "Then saith he—see thou do it not—worship God." And the Son himself refused the adoration of one that believed not in his divinity: Matth. xix. 17: "Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God.*" Thus the worshiping of creatures is prohibited in the strongest terms, and the prohibition is enforced by example. But it is the will of the Father "that all *men* should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father." And that supreme honor is intended, will be further evident from the following testimony. Psalm xcvi. 7: "Worship him all ye Gods." Heb. i. 6: "When he bringeth in the first—begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Psalm cii. 24, 25: "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." This God is Jesus Christ, as appears

from Heb. i. 10: Isaiah vi. 3: "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." John xii. 41: "These things said Isaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him," that is, of the Son of God. John xx. 28: "Thomas—said unto him, My Lord and my God." Matth. xxviii. 9: "Jesus met them—and they came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him." Acts vii. 59: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Rev. v. 13: "And every creature which is in Heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea—heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Rev. i. 5. 6: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Phil. ii. 10, 11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in Heaven and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father "

Can any testimony be more positive? The supreme worship of the Son is commanded, and enforced by the strongest examples; the highest acts of devotion are paid to him. We honor the Father with supreme worship, and

we must honor the Son, even as we honor the Father; and the very angels must do the same. The Psalmist addresses the Son as the God of life and death, and the ever living creator of the universe. In vision, Isaiah heard the rapturous seraphims praising him as the thrice holy Lord of hosts, whose glory filled the whole earth. Thomas, in rapture, calls him his Lord and his God. The disciples hold him by the feet and worship him with the deepest reverence. The dying Stephen pays to him his last act of devotion as the omniscient and omnipresent God, and to him commits his departing spirit as to that God besides whom there is no Savior. John, in vision, heard all the creatures in Heaven, earth and sea, ascribing equal and eternal honors to God and the Lamb. Here the Father and the Son are distinctly worshiped at the same moment, and the honor ascribed to each is the same. Again, John, as with the voice of the church universal, strikes the highest notes of gratitude and praise, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood—to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." How animating the thought! The glory and dominion of the Savior are "for ever and ever." He shall never retire from the throne. The tallest angel, with every creature in the vast universe, shall forever bend the knee before him, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord of all. The conclusion is irresistible.

The Son is equally with the Father the object of supreme worship. We hope it will be carefully noticed, that in several of the passages just presented, the Son bears the title of God and Lord of hosts; and, to these we will add a few more,—

Psalm xlv. 6. Heb. i. 8: "But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Isaiah ix. 6: "His name shall be called—the mighty God." John i. 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Acts xx. 28: "Take heed—to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Rom. ix. 5: "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." 1 John v. 20: "This is the true God and eternal life."\*

The Deity of the Father is no where expressed in stronger terms than is that of the Son in the passages now presented. He is God, the mighty God, whose throne is for ever and ever, the true God, and God over all, blessed for ever.

Let us now review the points we have endeavored to establish.

1. There is no proof that the Son is not equal, in natural perfection, to the Father. The passages usually selected for that purpose,

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\* He is the Lord God of the holy prophets. Rev. 22. 6. 16.

do, as a whole, prove him to be the Father's equal.

2. As a Son, he possesses perfectly the same nature with the Father, is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person; is without beginning, eternal, uncreated and almighty, omniscient, and every where present; in truth possesses all divine perfections equally with the Father, is equally with him the object of divine worship, and must be honored even as the Father. He is worshiped as God and the Lord of hosts. He is God, the mighty God, true God, and God over all, blessed for ever, and his throne is for ever and ever.

If any one can carefully examine the testimony we have presented, and still doubt the proper Deity of the Son, or his full equality with the Father in original perfection, surely he is an object of pity, and one that calls for our ardent prayers.

Christian brethren, our Savior is divine, he is the Father's equal! Glory be to God for his unspeakable gift! Had some mighty angel been sent to bless our ruined world, and wipe away our sorrows, how great the mercy! But, O Grace incomprehensible! he at whose feet the highest angel throws his crown—he who stands in perfection, infinitely above the brightest seraph—he whose glory fills the vast universe, is given for the life of a rebellious world! He stoops from infinite heights of majesty, grasps perishing rebels from everlasting

death, and bears them to the mansions of glory. *Condescension infinite! Divinity unites with humanity! That Babe that lies in the manger at Bethlehem is "the mighty God!" That man of poverty who travels through Judea preaching peace to the lost, is "the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." The man who is pressed with sorrows and covered with bloody sweat in Gethsemane, is the Lord of hosts! He who wears the crown of thorns, endures the cruel scourge, and receives the sentence of death at Pilate's bar, is he who distributes crowns of life! That mangled victim which languishes and dies\* on the cross is God over all, blessed for ever! And that blood which issues from his opening wounds is the*

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\* When we say a man dies, we do not mean that his spirit dies; so when we say that God died, we do not mean that the Divinity died, but merely that the human body died, which existed in such intimate connexion with divinity as to justify the scriptural expression: "The word was made flesh." And the blood of God is the blood of that body: such language the Scriptures justify. John 3. 16: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Rev. ii. 8: "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive. See Isaiah xlv. 6: "I am the first and the last; beside me there is no God." If any say that in John iii. 16. the word Christ ought to have been supplied, instead of the word God, we reply, that "Christ is over all, God blessed for ever," and further connexion justifies the translation.

Acts xx. 28: "Take heed—to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

blood of God! The sun blushes at the sight, and darkness veils the face of day! See here, christians! here flows the crimson fountain in which you have washed your robes and made them white!—and but for this fountain, poor wandering sinners, you were the subjects of endless sorrows! Come, wash and live for ever! Unite with the church universal in the anthem of praise, “unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT A MERE QUALITY IN DEITY, BUT A REAL PERSON, POSSESSING ALL DIVINE PERFECTIONS, AND TRULY GOD.

It is by the Holy Spirit christians “are sealed unto the day of redemption;” consequently, to understand his real character must be matter of the deepest interest. “Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” To him we are indebted both for regenerating and sanctifying grace; without which, we could never be qualified for the enjoyment of Heaven. But for his generous influences, the Son of God had died in vain—none of all our race would have

received his salvation. Therefore, love and gratitude to the Holy Spirit should lead us to study the sacred oracles, that we may know his divine perfections.

I. That the Holy Spirit is a real person, and not a mere quality in Deity, may be established by a variety of facts presented in the Holy Scriptures.

1. The Holy Spirit has a name, as if a real person, Matthew xxviii. 19: "Go—teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Thus he has a name just as the Father has, and we are baptized as fully in the name of the Spirit, as in that of the Father. There could be no propriety in baptizing first in the name of the Father, and then again, in the name of a mere quality of the Father. This would involve the utmost absurdity. The passage clearly conveys the idea of entire equality between the Father and the Holy Spirit in point of personality.

The Son gives the Spirit the name of Comforter. John xiv. 26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." Could any suppose that the Savior meant in this case a mere quality of Deity? In what sense could such be called the Comforter? It is most absurd to suppose that the Savior meant any thing less than a real person. It is impossible that language should convey



more clearly the idea of real personality. He not only calls the Spirit the Comforter, but applies to him the personal pronoun HE, and represents him as coming and teaching. Hence, the idea of real personality is forced upon the mind.

2. The Holy Spirit and the Father are mentioned so distinctly at the same time, as to show that the one has as real personality as the other. Isaiah xlviii. 16: "The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." This shows that the Father and the Spirit are two in personality, else the passage must mean that the Lord God, and a mere quality, or part of himself, sent the Son! Can any sane mind be so perverted as to believe in such absurdity, as that the Lord God, and a quality of himself, sent the Son? How ridiculous is such an idea! and what folly does it charge upon the sacred oracles. The passage clearly proves that the Spirit is a real person, and not a mere quality in Deity.

The same is evident from Matth. iii. 16, 17: "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove. And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son." Thus, while the Spirit descended, the Father spoke from Heaven; hence, the Father and the Spirit acted at the same moment, as distinct intelligent agents, or persons, each performing his own part in the grand scene. How can any one doubt the real personality of the Spirit?

3. The Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit as being vexed, grieved, and resisted. Isa. lxiii. 10: "But they vexed his holy Spirit." Eph. iv. 30: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Acts vii. 51: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Thus, as an intelligent agent, or person, the Holy Spirit is vexed, grieved and resisted. Real personal qualities and exercises are attributed to the Spirit, in a manner calculated to impel the belief that he is a real person.

4. According to the sacred oracles, the Holy Spirit speaks, commands, designates, appoints and teaches as a person. Acts xiii. 2. 4: "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them." And "they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." Neh. ix. 20: "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them." Luke xii. 12: "The Holy Ghost shall teach you what you ought to say." John xiv. 26: "The Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost—shall teach you all things." How can any read these passages and deny that the Spirit is a real person? What but a person can speak, command, designate, appoint and teach? These passages attribute to the Spirit personal qualities and exercises as fully as such are attributed to men. We may just as well deny that men are persons, as deny that the Spirit is a person. Men speak, command, designate, appoint and teach, and so does the Spirit.

5. The Scriptures teach that the Spirit is sent and comes as a person. Psalm civ. 30: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit." John xiv. 26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." 2 Chron. xv. 1: "The Spirit of God came upon Azariah." John xv. 26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." Can any one read these passages without feeling the impression that the Spirit is a real person? He is sent as a person and comes as a person. Could such language be, in any sense, applicable to a mere quality in Deity?

6. The Spirit testifies as a person. Neh. ix. 3: "Thou testifidst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets." John xv. 26: "The Spirit of truth—shall testify of me." 1 John v. 6, 7: "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in Heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." Thus, the Spirit is represented as an intelligent witness. We may just as well deny that the intelligent witnesses that appear in our courts of justice are persons, as to deny that the Spirit is a person.

7. The Spirit judges and chooses as a person. Acts xv. 28: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." 1 Cor. xii. 11: "All these things worketh the self-same Spirit, di-

viding to every man as will." It seemed good to the Holy Ghost just as it did to the apostles. There is the same reason to believe that he is a person, as to believe that they were persons. He judged and made choice, and so did they. He works as a person, he divides as a person, and he wills as a person, and the personal pronoun is applied to him as to every other person.

A vast number of passages, besides those presented, might be introduced to prove the personality of the Spirit; but it is deemed useless to offer more for the benefit of minds capable of resisting evidence so clear as that already given. Such would not believe, though one should rise from the dead and declare it. The personality of the Spirit has been proved seven times over. Each one of the seven arguments introduced is alone sufficient to prove that the Holy Spirit is a real person.

It is impossible that evidence should be clearer than that presented. The Spirit has a name as a person. He and the Father are, at the same time, distinctly mentioned as persons. The Spirit is vexed, grieved, and resisted as a person. He speaks, commands, designates, appoints, and teaches as a person. He is sent and comes as a person. He testifies as a person. He judges and chooses as a person. What clearer evidence can there be that any being is a person.

II. The Spirit possesses all divine perfections, and, of course, is truly God.

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1. The Spirit is eternal. Hebrews ix. 14: "Christ—through the ETERNAL SPIRIT, offered himself without spot to God." Thus he is uncreated, without beginning, and without end, just as the Father is. It may as truly be said of the Spirit as of the Father, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God;" for nothing but God is eternal. The Spirit is eternal, and, therefore, the Spirit is God.

2. The Spirit is omniscient. Isaiah xi. 2: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." 1 Tim. iv. 1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith." 1 Peter i. 11: "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11: "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God—the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." According to these passages the Spirit possesses foreknowledge. He knows all that will come to pass. He knows all things, even the deep things of God. He knows whatever the Father knows; and, consequently, he is the omniscient God as the Father is.

3. The Spirit is omnipresent. Psal. cxxxix. 7: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or

whither shall I flee from thy presence?" It is as impossible to go from the presence of the Spirit as to flee from the presence of the Father; both are alike every where present. 1 Cor. vi. 19: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" The Spirit, unless capable of being omnipresent, could not be in the bodies of all the saints at the same time. The fact that he dwells in the bodies of all the Lord's people, proves that he is every where present. Joel ii. 28: Acts ii. 17: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." If the Spirit were not capable of being omnipresent, he could not be poured out upon all flesh. The Spirit, then, is the omnipresent God.

4. The Spirit is omnipotent. Job xxxiii. 4: "The Spirit of God hath made me." Job xxvi. 13: "By his Spirit he garnished the Heavens." Gen. i. 2: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Psalm civ. 30: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created." These passages show that the Spirit is creator equally with the Father and the Son. He has power to create, and, consequently, must be omnipotent. He is called the Spirit of "might," Isaiah xi. 2: and it is asked, "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" That is, can his power be limited? A prophet, speaking of the fact that God made but one woman for the first man, asks, "Did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit.

And wherefore one?" Mal. i. 15. He had the RESIDUE of the SPIRIT,—he could have made more than one, had he intended man to have more than one wife. This shows that the Spirit has creative power. When God had created the first woman, he still had the power of the Spirit to create more, if more had been necessary. Thus we have the most abundant evidence that the Spirit is omnipotent.

5. The only sin unpardonable is that committed against the Holy Ghost. Matth. xii. 31, 32: "All manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Every sin is aggravated in proportion to the excellency of the character against which it is committed. To blaspheme the infinitely excellent Spirit is unpardonable. To suppose that the only sin unpardonable is committed against any thing less than real Deity, is absurd in the extreme. A word spoken against the Son, because he appeared in human nature, shall be forgiven; but to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, is to sin so directly against God, that it never shall be forgiven. The fact, then, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is unpardona-

ble, proves that he is truly God, and of terrible majesty.

6. The Spirit is so associated with the Father and the Son in the formula of baptism, as to prove that whatever worship, honor, or service is due to the Father and Son, is due to the Spirit. In baptism we are alike consecrated to the service of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Hence, he is God equally with the Father and Son.

7. Christians are born of God. John i. 13: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This God is the Spirit; for "except a man be born—of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This proves that the Spirit is truly God.

8. The Spirit is called God. Acts v. 3, 4: "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?—Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Thus he is plainly called God, and that because he is truly God.

The Spirit, then, is **ETERNAL, OMNISCIENT, OMNIPRESENT**; the **OMNIPOTENT CREATOR**; of **MAJESTY** so **TERRIBLE**, that to **BLASPHEME HIM** is **SIN UNPARDONABLE**; he is associated with the Father and Son as **EQUALLY** with **THEM WORTHY** of **HONOR** and **SERVICE**; he is **GOD**, of whom christians are born, and **GOD**, unto whom Ananias lied, and



for it was smitten dead. How can any look upon these facts as presented in the sacred oracles, and doubt the divinity of the Holy Spirit! In all the sacred volume, there is not the least intimation given, that he is not truly God; and in all the vast number of passages in which he is mentioned, there is evidence that he is a divine person. His work of regenerating and sanctifying fallen men, is such as none but God could do. It is ranked with the work of creation. Eph. ii. 10: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Every thing in the Scriptures, respecting the Holy Spirit, tends to prove that he is truly God. And cold must be the heart that could desire him to be any thing less than the Almighty Jehovah. How interesting is the thought, that he who dwells in every real christian, possesses all divine perfections, and is truly God! How amazing is the condescension of the Holy Spirit in coming to make our bodies his dwelling place! He who dwells in us is Almighty, and able to guide us safely to Heaven. Christians should constantly live under the impression that the all-seeing God makes their bodies his temple. How ardently should they love and revere the blessed Comforter, the Holy Spirit of truth; and how carefully should they avoid every thing that may tend to grieve him, and cause him to withdraw from them his favorable presence. And every one should tremble at the thought of be-

ing left to deny the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit. How awfully dangerous is such perverseness! How little short does it come of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost! It needs but spring from malice of heart to consummate the unpardonable sin. A word spoken against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven. Let all, then, beware how they believe and speak of the Holy Spirit.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

THE doctrine of the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit, is connected with the doctrine of the necessity of divine influences to regenerate and sanctify fallen men, in order to capacitate them for the enjoyment of Heaven. The doctrine of regeneration and sanctification depends on the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit. Unless the spirit be a real and divine person, he cannot regenerate and sanctify men: hence the doctrine of regeneration and sanctification, necessarily supposes the real personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit.

The necessity of the operations of the Spirit to regenerate and sanctify men, originated in the apostasy of the first man. "God created man upright," that is, created him a holy be-

ing, who needed no regenerating influences. Man was so constituted as to love God supremely, and his creatures in proportion as they exhibited the divine character. Man's obligation to love God supremely was natural and perpetual. It originated in the facts, that God is infinitely lovely, and is man's creator and supporter. If he were not lovely there could be no natural obligation to love him. Love cannot be due to a being who has no loveliness; and if God were not the creator and, of course, the proprietor of man, he would have no right to require man to love him. Consequently, man's obligation originated in the infinite loveliness of God, and the relation he sustains to man as his creator and sustainer. Hence, the obligation of man to love God supremely is natural. It is also perpetual. If it be reasonable that man should this moment love God supremely because he is infinitely lovely and is his creator and sustainer, it is equally so the next, and so to endless eternity. God always will be infinitely lovely, and will always be man's creator. Thus, the reasons of man's obligation to love God will for ever exist. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," is a natural and perpetual obligation, resulting from God's loveliness and man's relation to him as his creature. The penalty annexed to this obligation is also natu-

ral, and not arbitrary, as some suppose. Man was so constituted, as to be happy only in fulfilling this natural and perpetual obligation; and in a state of innocence it required no effort to fulfill, it was as easy as it was natural. The violation of this obligation was, of course, a departure from happiness, and when once the departure is made, the tendency is to depart farther and farther forever. Consequently, the loss of happiness must be eternal, unless man be brought back to God, the fountain of happiness. There is no tendency in sin to reform itself; hence, unless God restore man, he will wander farther and farther from happiness during endless eternity, and necessarily must be eternally miserable. Thus, it is obvious, that the penalty or threatening annexed to the divine law is natural and not arbitrary. It necessarily results from the relations that God has constituted, and is denounced against man to deter from crime, and secure obedience, and the consequent happiness of God's rational creatures. As man's happiness depended on obedience, it was proper that God should set before him the awful consequences of disobedience, and thus set up the strongest possible barrier against man's ruin. Hence, there was benevolence in denouncing this awful penalty, or threatening against man, and justice requires its execution upon the guilty.

Adam, the parent of our race, was placed under this natural and perpetual obligation.

He came holy and happy from the hand of his creator, but the perpetuity of his happiness depended on his continuing to love God according to this natural obligation. The violation of it must necessarily result in the loss of holiness and happiness, and unless reclaimed the loss must be eternal. If he be eternally sinful he must be eternally miserable. Sin being a departure from God, the source of happiness must necessarily result in misery, and as there is no tendency in a sinner to reform himself, if let alone, he will be eternally a sinner, and, of course, must be eternally miserable. The command given to Adam, was founded upon his natural obligation to love God supremely; consequently, the violation of the command was a violation of his natural obligation, and, of course, brought upon him the natural penalty of that obligation, the loss of holiness and happiness, and consequent misery. He necessarily experienced the reverse of the holy and happy state in which he was placed, except so far as the interposition of a Saviour prevented. The plan of salvation was devised before he fell, else, probably, he would have fallen, at once, into hell, as did the fallen angels. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," was, doubtless, a simple denunciation of the natural penalty of violating man's natural obligation. It was the necessary result of departing from God, the fountain of happiness. In the very day that Adam eat the forbidden

fruit, he became a sinful and miserable creature, and hid himself from the Lord, whom he had, in his original state, loved most ardently. He also became liable to temporal death, and eternal misery beyond the grave. All these resulted from his disobedience, and, therefore, there is reason to believe that they all were included in the threatening, "thou shalt surely die."

The idea that mere temporal death was the penalty, has no foundation. It is against facts. To die does not always, in the Scriptures, mean departure out of this life—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." This cannot mean a cessation of existence, but that it shall lose happiness, that which makes being desirable. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." This does not mean that he shall not exist, but that he shall not enjoy the happiness that renders existence an object of desire. "To be carnally minded is death." Death is attended with suffering and life with enjoyment: hence, death is, in Scripture, often used as a term to designate misery, and life to designate happiness; to die is to become miserable, and to live is to become happy: hence, the threatening, "thou shalt surely die," doubtless included all the misery to which Adam became liable by disobedience.

The notion of some, that in eating the forbidden fruit, Adam violated the physical laws of his nature, and by it produced a derangement

of his bodily appetites and passions so as to corrupt his soul, and also to convey the same derangement and consequent corruption to all his posterity, is unreasonable in the extreme. It supposes that a single violation of the physical laws of Adam's nature, by eating a little fruit, produced a permanent and hereditary disease in a constitution unbroken by the ravages of sinful excesses, and one which supported natural life for near a thousand years. That a single excess should not have been overcome by such a constitution, is incredible; and much less is it credible that it should have formed a hereditary disease descending to all his vast posterity. And, that the body, mere organized matter, the passive instrument of the soul, should corrupt the soul, seems beyond the belief of a sane mind; the man capable of believing it must be under some mental disease. For such a notion there is no foundation, either in Scripture or reason. The soul controls the body, and not the body the soul. The corruption of our nature is not the result of any bodily disease in Adam, but the result of his sinning as the acting head of our race. With him God established a covenant, so including his posterity, that they all sinned in him as their acting head.

The term covenant, as used in Scripture, is applicable to a contract made between two parties, because such contract is a plan or order of action between the parties. A will is

a covenant, because an order or law according to which executors and heirs are bound to act. Any law or rule which God imposes upon men by his authority, is a covenant. The ten commandments are a covenant. Exod. xxxiv. 28; "And he wrote upon the tables the *words* of the covenant, the ten commandments." God made a covenant with Noah, his seed after him, and all the beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven, Gen. ix. 9, 10. This covenant was a plan of dealing with Noah, his seed, and all animal creation. Any order, then, which God lays down, according to which he will treat his creatures, is a covenant without regard to their consent. Hence, he calls the putting of his laws into the minds of his people, and writing them upon their hearts, a covenant, Jer. xxxi. 33.

That God did give Adam a law or rule of action, cannot be denied; for "the Lord commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 16, 17.

This law was an order laid down according to which God did treat Adam, and therefore, was a covenant. The Greek word *diatheke*, translated covenant, signifies disposition or order; that is, it is a thing placed in order. Hence, any rule of action is a covenant. There was, then, a covenant made with Adam,



and fact proves that it embraced his posterity ; for they are treated just as if they had broken it themselves.

All mankind descending from Adam "by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression." This to some appears to be very absurd, and to convey no intelligible idea, and yet a careful examination will show it is strictly true. It must be admitted that Adam was the natural head of the whole race. He was made the fountain from which every human being was to descend. He and all his descendants constituted but one body, of which he was the acting head. In him, as the acting head, the entire body sinned when he partook of the forbidden fruit. By this I mean that his act was the act of the body. Consequently, the body was held responsible for the act of the head. Each member was equally with the head involved in condemnation. Paul asserted the principle here involved when he said that Levi payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him. Heb. vii. 9, 10. Abraham, as a father, was the representative of his race, so far as they were in his loins when he paid tithes to Melchisedec. What he did, the race did that afterwards descended from him. Levi paid tithes, not by his own personal act, but by Abraham, his acting head. All mankind descending from Adam, by ordinary generation,

were in his loins when he committed his first transgression, and consequently, sinned in him as their acting head, as Levi paid tithes through Abraham, his acting head. The act of Adam was the act of the body, and was imputed to him and all that were in his loins; that is, it was charged upon the entire body. It was accounted to each member of the body for condemnation as fully as to the head. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." And by the offence of one, *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation, Rom. v. 18. Adam's disobedience made all his race sinners. By a single act he brought condemnation upon the whole family of man.

The theory just presented is a fair induction from facts. It is an undeniable fact that every human being is born into the world with such a liability to sin, that no one has ever escaped sinning, so soon as capable. This liability to sin, is the worst of all judgments ever inflicted. It is the source of all sin and suffering. Now, can we suppose such a liability to sin without some previous cause? Why this entire corruption of nature? Why all this fatal tendency to sin, if the act of the head be not accounted to the members? If this liability to sin was not contained in the threatening denounced against Adam, then more was inflicted than truth and justice required. The moral condition of every child born into the world, is just as bad as was that of Adam after he fell. Ev-

ery one has with him the same corruption of nature or sinful tendency—is equally a fallen creature, and just as liable to endless suffering in a future world. The condition of every one is just as if he had violated the command for himself. All that was threatened against Adam did fall equally upon his posterity. Fact proves that they did fall with him in his first transgression—they are fallen.

If all fell with him, is it reasonable to believe that all sinned in him as their acting head, else why should they be involved in the ruins of his fall? It is expressly declared in Scripture that “the wages of sin is death;” and that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon men, for that all have sinned.” Now we know that human beings die in every stage of existence. Thousands die before being capable of moral action, and yet death is to them the wages of sin, and passes upon them because they have sinned. It must, then, have been in Adam, as their acting head, not in their own persons. “Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” Rom. v. 14. They had sinned, but not actively, as Adam did, but through his action as their head.

It is asserted that “in Adam all die.” 1 Cor. xv. 22. Now, death is the wages of sin: if all die in Adam, all must have sinned in him; for their dying in him must be the wages of their

sinning in him. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," that is, because all have sinned.

Adam was "the figure of him that was to come." Rom. v. 14. That is, he was a type of Christ. He was the head of a great body as Christ is; he was the first man—Christ is the second man. The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam *was made* a quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. This shows that Adam and Christ were alike public heads. Adam's members are by union with him made sinners; Christ's members by union with him are made righteous. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." Rom. v. 19.

Adam's disobedience is charged upon his body, as well as upon himself. By it he himself and all his members are condemned. The one unrighteousness covers the entire body. Christ's obedience is charged upon himself and members. The one righteousness covers the entire body. Christ's is accounted to his members for justification, as fully as if they had wrought it out themselves. They are treated just as if they had fulfilled for themselves the demands of the broken law. The one righteousness justifies the whole. It is not taken from the head and put upon the members, but the members are united to the head and made one with him, so that one righteousness justifi-

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fies the entire body. Christ is "of God-made unto us—righteousness." "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." 1 Cor. i. 30. Rom. iv. 6. The unrighteousness of Adam is charged upon himself and all his members for condemnation. It is as fully accounted to his members, as if they had violated the command in their own persons. They are treated just as if they had eaten the forbidden fruit; the one unrighteousness covers and condemns alike Adam and his members. "As in Adam all (his members) die, even so in Christ, shall all (his members) be made alive." "But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23. None but Christ's are made alive in him; for none others are in him. The comparison is between the two bodies. Adam represents the one and Christ the other. We were made sinners in Adam; we are made righteous in Christ. From Adam we inherit an unrighteousness that condemns us, and a corruption of nature that disqualifies us for heaven and fits us for hell. From Christ we inherit a righteousness, by which we are justified, and a renovation of nature, that disqualifies us for hell and fits us for heaven. Our first birth is unto Adam, and under his disobedience or unrighteousness, and in a state of spiritual corruption. Hence, to be saved we must be born

again a second time, unto Christ and under his righteousness.

The disobedience of Adam, is the original ground of condemnation, and all actual sins are but aggravations of it. It is in Adam that all die, and not in themselves: they die as parts of the body that sinned in him, as the acting head. This is evidently the view presented in the fifth of Romans: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Death passed upon all men in Adam; in him all die, for that, or because all men sinned in him, for death is the wages of sin. The one sin of the body, through the acting head, brought death upon the whole; and from Adam to Moses it reigned even over those who had not sinned in person actively as Adam did. They "had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it *was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift, for the judgment was by one (offence) to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, *as* by the offence of one

*judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."* Rom. v. 12. 15. 19. By Adam sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Death passed upon all men because all have sinned. By Adam's offence many are dead. Judgment was by his one offence to condemnation. By this one man's offence death reigned. By his one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation, because by his disobedience they were all made, or constituted, sinners. Thus, it is as evident as truth can be, that the offence of Adam condemned his entire race, and made them sinners, and consequently, is the original ground of condemnation. By him, as the acting head, the entire body sinned, else they were condemned while innocent. They were condemned by one act of disobedience, and by it were made sinners. The stubborn fact is firmly asserted by the unerring voice of the Holy Ghost. It is written in the deepest recess of our nature, and inscribed upon every tomb. The earth is but a common grave-yard. No explanation can change the facts. They stand prominent and firm as the deep seated rock amidst the mists and dashing waves of the mighty ocean. All sinned in Adam, and fell with him in his first transgression.

Some object to the truth just presented because they suppose it involves the doctrine that infants dying in infancy, perish forever. There is no ground for this objection. The Lord is able to regenerate and save all the infants he is pleased to remove to eternity before they become capable of hearing the gospel. If infants dying in infancy are not regenerated and saved through Christ, they can never unite with their mothers in the song of redeeming love. The confession of faith teaches us, that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit." All infants are not elected, for some grow up to maturity and die in their sins; but all infants dying in infancy may be elected and saved. The confession of faith, then, does not teach, as some suppose, that infants dying in infancy perish. The doctrine, then, that all sinned in Adam, and fell with him in his first transgression, does not necessarily suppose that infants dying in infancy are lost. I now proceed to show, that the divine plan of dealing with Adam and his posterity, was just and benevolent.

1. The fact that the Lord adopted this plan is proof of this. Surely the judge of all the earth will do right. With this I might dismiss the subject; but it is proper to exhibit, so far as practicable, the righteousness of the Divine conduct, towards his creatures. Hence, I remark, that it is generally admitted that bodies of people, may be justly held responsible for



the deeds of their representatives. Adam was the proper representative of his posterity. It may be objected that we did not choose him to be our representative. But is not the right of election founded upon the fact, that men are imperfect? Therefore it is important to have the privilege of selecting the best. But if all were perfect, no one would claim the right of election, there would be no ground for choice. Infinite wisdom selected Adam as our representative, consequently, we suffered no loss by not choosing for ourselves.

2. If Adam had continued in his holy and happy state, and confirmed his posterity in it, would not all have justified the divine arrangement? Would any have complained of injustice on the ground that they did not choose Adam as their representative? If we would gladly receive the good resulting from such an arrangement, why not submit to the evil?

3. The trial was short and easy. It is reasonable to believe that the trial would have terminated with the birth of the first child, had Adam held to his integrity. After that all could not have died in him, and, of course, there is reason to believe that there the trial would have terminated, and that all would have been confirmed in holiness and happiness.

The trial was the easiest of which we can conceive. Nothing was required but abstinence from the fruit of a single tree, amidst

abounding plenty of the choicest fruits earth ever yielded. The trial was so easy, and the motives to obedience so powerful, that it is difficult to see how the plan could miscarry. It is amazing that Adam, a perfect being, should have fallen under circumstances so favorable to his standing.

4. Adam was as holy as any of his posterity could have been, and he had more to incline him to obedience than any other could have had. He had a more numerous posterity depending on his obedience than any other. Consequently, he was more likely to stand than any one else. Had all his posterity, one by one, passed the same trial, all doubtless would have fallen. No one of them could have been more holy than Adam, and no one could have had so much to incline him to obedience. Hence, all must have fallen under the same trial; consequently, no wrong is done the race by making one the test by which the state of all should be determined.

5. If we had not fallen in a representative, there would have been no ground for restoring us in a representative. If there had not been a first Adam, there could not have been a second Adam. It does not appear that there would have been any room for the plan of salvation. As the plan of salvation was devised before the fall, there is reason to believe that the whole arrangement with Adam was made to suit it so that we might be redeemed through

Jesus Christ. Thus, it appears that God's plan of dealing with Adam and his posterity is both just and benevolent.

From what has been said, it is evident that the necessity of the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit originated in the apostasy of the first man. Since the fall all mere human beings are by nature totally depraved. By this it is not meant that depravity has become a part of the soul, but that the soul is entirely corrupted; that all its powers and passions have become so inordinate that the entire tendency is only, and continually, to evil. It is not meant that the soul is so bad as lost spirits in perdition, or so bad as it can be—"evil men and seducers wax worse and worse," but that it is entirely destitute of holiness. There is in it no love to God, it has no relish for the divine character. Nor is it intended to deny that unrenewed men do many things good in themselves, but it is denied that they do any thing out of pure love to God.

When it is said that all mere human beings are, by nature, totally depraved, it is meant that they are all born destitute of love to God, and with an entire inclination to evil. This is confirmed by fact. Every infant does sin so soon as capable. We see evil tendencies in the very first manifestations of rational exercise. To suppose that every human being falls into sin so soon as capable, with infallible certainty, without any previous inclination or

bias, is an absurdity. It is to suppose an effect without a cause. It is sometimes said infants are born without character. If by character, is meant that which is formed by a succession of rational acts, no one ever contended that infants are born with such character; but if it be meant that they are born without sinful propensities, it is not true. It is contrary to positive facts. If God be infinitely lovely, is it not more easy to love him than to hate him?

If, then, there were no depravity in the soul of an infant, would it not naturally love that which is infinitely lovely? If infants were perfectly pure, they would love God as naturally as water flows down hill: they would all love holiness and hate sin. But they all sin as naturally as they inhale the atmosphere. This is decisive evidence that they are born in a state of total depravity. Hence, David said, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight.—Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psal. li. 2—5. The connexion shows, that David is here confessing his own sin and depravity, and not the sin and depravity of his mother, as some absurdly suppose. He openly confesses his sin, and attributes it to the depravity of his nature.

His very existence commenced in sin; he came into being with a depraved nature.

Paul declares, " We have proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. iii. 9—18. Such is the language in which an inspired apostle portrays the depravity of all men, both Jews and Gentiles. They have all gone out of the original way, in which man was created to go. Such is the moral pollution of their hearts, that their throats, through which this pollution is vented, are, in a moral sense, offensive as an open sepulchre is in a natural sense. It is impossible that moral pollution could be depicted in stronger language. The deadly poison of asps is under their lips; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Such is the testimony of the unerring Spirit of God. There is no filial fear of God in the heart of man in his unrenewed

state, consequently, no holiness; but he is as a sepulchre full of loathsome pollution. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, is only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. "Their inward part is very wickedness." Psal. v. 9. "The heart of the sons of men, is fully set in them to do evil." Eccl. viii. 11. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. "Out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Matt. xv. 19. "The carnal mind is enmity against, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7. These, and many other passages that might be presented, show that man's depravity is total. So entire is his depravity, that he has not of himself the least tendency to forsake his sin and turn to God. Hence, he is said to be "dead in trespasses and sins." He has no more tendency to holiness, than a dead body has to perform the functions of life. If let alone, he will as certainly remain in his sin, as a dead body let alone will lie in the grave. Hence, nothing short of divine power, can raise him from spiritual death to spiritual life.

The necessity, then, of the operations of the Spirit, originated in the apostasy of the first man, and is perpetuated by man's entire and continued depravity. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." How deplorable and helpless is man in his fall-

en state! So deeply is he sunk in ruin, as not to desire relief! Stupid and degraded, the terrors of hell cannot deter from crime, nor the hope of heaven incline him to the paths of holiness. The tears, and blood, and groans, and dying agonies of a Savior, cannot move him from his purpose of rebellion against infinite excellence.

How boundless is the goodness of God, in not only giving his Son to die for us, but also in sending his Almighty Spirit to create "us in Christ Jesus unto good works!" How deeply should we humble ourselves in view of the pollutions of our nature! and O how great is our debt of gratitude to the Father, Son, and Spirit, for the wonderful plan of salvation! How constantly and affectionately should we seek and cherish the influences of the blessed Spirit, who alone can seal us unto the day of redemption!

Glory unspeakable be to the Father, Son, and Spirit, three persons, and yet one everlasting Jehovah, for ever and ever.

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## CHAPTER VI.

THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE COMMON AND SPECIAL.

It has been shown, that all men by nature are depraved—that all are alike destitute of holiness. In this respect "as in water, face an-

swers to face, so the heart of man to man." Prov. xxvii. 19. No good reason can be given why all human beings are not, according to their capacities, so desperate in wickedness, as fallen spirits in despair, unless it be that they are placed under a dispensation of grace, and restrained by the influences of the Holy Spirit. We know there are some instances of individuals becoming, to appearance at least, as desperate as spirits in perdition. Some blaspheme God, to the extent of their powers, and even destroy themselves. Now, as all hearts are equally destitute of holiness, there can be no reason why one man is better than another, unless it be that he is made so by the operations of the Spirit. "Who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. One of two things must be inevitably true: either, that one man is by creation better than another, or, that he is made so by the influences of the Spirit. The fact exists, some men are better than others, and it must be either by creation or by grace. Paul, speaking of himself and others, declares they "were by nature children of wrath, even as others." Eph. ii. 3. All, then, by nature are children of wrath alike; hence the difference is by grace. By the common operations of the Spirit, are meant those general and restraining influences, which are forced upon mankind in general, to preserve them from absolute desperation in wretched-



ness, and enable them to live together in society, and fit them for enjoying the common means of grace. It is said, Psal. lxxvi. 10: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." This shows clearly, that men would be worse than they are, if God did not restrain them. The wrath that would be beyond fulfilling God's purposes, were men left to themselves, the Lord restrains. How does he restrain it but by the operations of his Spirit? When, before the flood, the earth was filled with violence, "the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man,—yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." Gen. vi. 3. His Spirit would not always strive with man, but he would strive with him a hundred and twenty years longer, that is, to the time of the deluge.

Some believe, that the Spirit never strives with sinners by operating upon their hearts, but that he operates only upon christians to cause them to strive with sinners, and that the Holy Ghost is resisted by resisting those in whom he dwells. While it is admitted the resisting the truth preached, of which he is the author, is in one sense resisting the Spirit, yet it is not the only sense in which he is resisted. The Savior, speaking of the Spirit, said, "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John xvi. 8. This certainly conveys the idea,

that the Spirit will operate directly upon the world. But it may be replied that it is expressly said, that the world cannot receive him, "because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." But this means that the world cannot receive him as a comforter. He shall reprove not comfort the world. The world does not receive, but resist and reject him. His operations are forced upon sinners, he strives with them, while they know him not, and in their blindness, they resist and reject his influences. Regenerated persons receive the Spirit; he dwells permanently in them, and they cherish and value his operations. "I will pray the Father, and he will send you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; *even* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John xiv. 16, 17. The passage shows that the disciples, who knew the Spirit, and in whom he then dwelt, had not received him in the sense in which they were to receive him, as the comforter; but the disciples had received him in another sense, for he was actually in them. The passage, then, proves nothing more than that the world cannot receive the Spirit as the comforter. It is admitted that there is a sense in which christians receive the Spirit, and in which the world does not receive him. He ~~makes~~ the bodies of christians his perpetual

dwelling place, and they delightfully yield to his influences. To the world he is an unwelcome visitant; in the bodies of sinners he has no permanent dwelling place—they vex, resist, and grieve him away. He again and again repeats his unwelcome visits, until the sinner is either made to yield, or is finally given up to destruction. That the Spirit does operate directly upon the hearts of sinners, previous to their being regenerated, is evident from the fact, that regeneration is effected by his agency. John i. 12, 13: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” They WERE BORN, when? evidently before they received Christ. “He came to his own, (territories) and his own (people) received him not.” But as many of them as received him, did it because they were born of God. The mass of the people rejected him; all would have done it had not some been “born of God.” Such received Christ, believed on him, and were adopted as his children. Thus he gave them the power, or privilege, of becoming the sons of God. Receiving Christ, believing on him, and receiving power to become the sons of God, were the results of being born of God. The difference between them and others, originated, not in the fact that they were of better blood than others,

or that they had less fleshly corruption, or that they were disposed to make a better use of free agency and exercise the power of their own wills in choosing Christ, but in the fact, that they were born "of God." Their blood, their will of the flesh, and their will of man, were all, like those of others, opposed to receiving Christ. The evangelist, in the strongest language possible, attributes their being born to God alone. Whatever instrumentalities there may have been, God was the entire agent in producing the new birth. In accordance with this, is the declaration, "If any *be* in Christ, *he is* a new CREATURE." 2 Cor. v. 17. This implies a new creation. It can be said of every one in Christ, that he has been created anew, and this is the reason why he is in Christ—"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. ii. 10. It is God that works in christians "both to WILL and to DO of *his* good pleasure." Phil. ii. 12. If christians need the positive agency of God, to enable them to will and to do of his good pleasure, how much more is it needed by the unrenewed sinner? The passages presented do prove, beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, that God does exercise a positive agency in producing the new birth. Other passages show, that the Spirit is the God who does exercise this agency. John iii. 5, 6: "Except a man be born *of* water, and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the king-

dom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." Tit. iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us—by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is the Spirit that renews men, and consequently, he does operate upon men in their unrenewed state. He does "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," by operating upon the hearts of those who obey not the gospel. Those operations, which extend to men in general, are called common, because they extend, in some degree, to all mankind in the present life—but not to all in an equal degree. Such operations are the gift of God, forced upon men, as rain from heaven. God forces rain upon men whether they are willing to receive it or not, and he sends just so much or so little, as he pleases. Even so, he pours out his Spirit upon men, whether they will receive or reject him, and he pours upon each one so much or so little, as he pleases; and he is not under any more obligation to pour his Spirit upon any, than he is to send rain from heaven. Men deserve nothing but wrath at the hand of God.

The doctrine, then, that the Spirit never operates directly upon the hearts of unrenewed men, but merely through christians who have the Spirit, is not true. It has no foundation in the Scriptures.

By the special operations of the Spirit, are meant those by which the hearts of men are renewed. Although there are operations common to all mankind, yet it is true, that God does not regenerate the hearts of all. It is a fact that some live and die without being renewed. Hence, those that are regenerated receive special operations, which are not experienced by others. The preaching of the gospel and the common operations of the Spirit, are calls to repentance; but the special operations of the Spirit are an effectual call. Paul preached "Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and wisdom of God." 1 Corinth. i. 23, 24. Preaching Christ crucified was a call, and, hence, all the Jews and Greeks who heard the gospel were called; but this call was to the one a stumbling block, and to the other foolishness, but to both the Jews and Greeks, who were called by the special operations of the Spirit, Christ was the power of God, and the wisdom of God. It is owing to the special influences of the Spirit, that any obey the gospel. Such is the depravity of human nature, that every individual resists both the gospel and the influences of the Spirit, until overcome by the power of God. By the power of the Holy Ghost the heart is renewed, and then, he that was the enemy of God, becomes his

friend, and willingly strives to obey his will. Various terms are used in Scripture to designate the change effected by the special operations of the Spirit. The individual changed, is said to be begotten, because it is to him the beginning of new life. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." He is said to be "gotten again," in reference to the cause of his natural existence. To be regenerated, is to be generated again, or a second time. It is to have a second cause and commencement of existence. The sinner changed, passes out of one state into another; hence, he is said to "be born again." As he receives a new nature he is said to be "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Thus the terms begat, begotten again, or regeneration, born again, created in Christ Jesus, have distinct meanings, but they all refer to one great change effected by the power of the Holy Ghost. And they imply that it is a real and permanent change.

Some controversy exists in relation to the fact, whether a sinner is active or passive in this important change. This controversy has probably arisen from different persons taking different views on the subject. There is a sense in which the sinner is entirely passive, and another in which he is entirely active. The terms begat, begotten, begotten again, regeneration, born again, and created, clearly imply that the sinner is passive, in respect to all that they express. He is passive in the recep-

tion of the Spirit's operation ; but this operation produces in the heart of the sinner living exercises. He is never more active than being born again. He believes, repents, and turns to the Lord with full purpose of obeying the gospel. The production of spiritual life makes the sinner exceedingly active. There is a sense, then, in which the sinner is entirely passive in the new birth, and another in which he is entirely active. One class look at the agency of the Spirit in renewing sinners, without recognising their exercises in believing, repenting, and turning to the Lord, and declare that these are passive in regeneration. Another class look at the exercises of sinners, under the renewing operations of the Spirit, and declare that they are active in regeneration. These declarations respect different facts. Both are true, but neither of them is the whole truth. In respect to divine agency, sinners are passive, but under the influence of that agency they are active.

Some believe that water baptism and regeneration are the same thing ; but for this there is no foundation in the Scriptures. It is true, that cleansing with water and cleansing with the Spirit are both baptism, but yet they are essentially different. The one is the baptism of the body with water, the other the baptism of the soul with the Holy Ghost. The one is the mere putting away the filth of the flesh, the other is the putting away the filth of the



soul. The one is a mere external symbol, the other an internal reality. The forerunner of the Savior said, "I indeed baptize you with water, but—he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Water baptism is performed by man, spiritual baptism by Christ. The distinction between water baptism and regeneration, is just as clear as language can make it. Hence, it seems scarcely possible that any one, who reads the Bible, can believe them to be the same thing.

There are those who believe, that regeneration is a change effected merely by the word. This doctrine is the necessary result of denying the real personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost. If there be no divine agent to perform the work of regeneration, then it follows, that if any change takes place in men, it must be by the word alone. None who believe in the personality and divinity of the Spirit, will advocate such a doctrine. And while persons deny that the Spirit is really a divine person, it is impossible that they should believe in the reality of his operations. This error has its foundation in the denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Hence, persons involved in it must first be brought to believe in the personality and Deity of the Spirit, before they embrace the doctrine of his divine operations on the hearts of men.

In support of the doctrine, that regeneration is a change effected merely by the word, it is

urged that the word is in Scripture represented as the seed sown in the heart, and that it is expressly said, that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; by the word of God." 1 Pet. i. 23.

But it may be replied that seed, of itself, will not vegetate without warmth and moisture. Sunshine and rain are necessary to cause seed to grow and bear fruit. The very fact, then, that the word is called seed, implies that it will require the sunshine and rain of the Holy Spirit to cause it to spring up and bear fruit unto eternal life. When ministers preach the gospel, they sow the seed, but it never vegetates until quickened by the Spirit.

The passage quoted from the first epistle of Peter, does not prove that any are born again by the word independently of the Spirit. The preceding verse shows that it was through the Spirit that they were born again: "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth **THROUGH THE SPIRIT.**" How through the Spirit? Peter answers, by "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." **THROUGH the SPIRIT they were BORN AGAIN—BY the WORD of God.** This accords with another passage. James i. 18: "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." The Lord was the agent, the word was the instrument. The truth is an instrument well adapted to the work of regeneration, and one most

effective when wielded by the Omnipotent Spirit. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The gospel "is the power of God unto salvation." The Savior said, "the words that I speak unto you, *they* are Spirit, and *they* are Life." Paul calls the word "the sword of the Spirit." These several passages show that the word of God is a powerful instrument; yet an instrument how powerful soever it may be, can effect nothing without an agent to wield it. The word, in the hand of the Almighty Spirit, "is the power of God unto salvation." "It is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" it is spirit and life; it is the sword that slays the enmity of the sinner's heart, and reconciles him to God. It is not the word, then, that regenerates the hearts of sinners, but the Almighty Spirit, whose sword is the word of God. The very fact that it is called the sword of the Spirit, proves that the Spirit is an agent, and the word an instrument that is effectual only when wielded. Some go to the opposite extreme, and deny the instrumentality of the word in regeneration. In defence of this many very plausible things may be said. According to the parable of the sower of the seed, the good ground existed before the seed fell upon it,

and, according to Luke, this good ground is "an honest and good heart." This honest and good heart, it is urged, must be a regenerated heart, and, of course, was made so before the word was received. This is certainly a forcible argument, and did it not stand in opposition to some plain declarations of Scripture, it would seem rather unreasonable to attempt to answer it. The following appears to be the only solution that can satisfy a reasonable mind. The parable seems to be intended to illustrate the effects of the word upon various classes of men, among whom some were regenerated persons. In this case, the falling of the seed upon the good ground represents the falling of the word upon the hearts of christians, and if so, it proves nothing in respect to the use of the word in their regeneration. They may have been previously regenerated by the instrumentality of the truth. In addition to this, it is worthy of notice, that the reason assigned for the unfruitfulness of the word, in those represented by the way-side, was, that the devil took it away. It fell on the hard beaten ground, was not covered, and, of course, exposed to the fowls of heaven. If the Holy Spirit had been sent to soften the ground, cover the seed, and prevent Satan from taking it away, would it not have sprung up and borne fruit? Why did the devil take away the word, if there were no danger of the Spirit using it in regenerating those on whose hearts it fell? This part of

the parable does suggest the idea, that the word might have been made fruitful, had it been permitted to lie upon the heart, although it were so hard as the beaten way-side.

The same is true in respect to that which fell among thorns. The reason that it was unfruitful was, that the thorns sprung up and choked it. The thorns represent "the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches." These "choke the word and becometh unfruitful." They who received the word would have been fruitful, had not the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches prevented. Had the Spirit attended the word, to counteract these influences, it would have made those who received it fruitful. Thus the parable, as a whole, seems to favor the idea, that the word may be the instrument of so renewing men, as to make them bear the fruit of holiness. It does not prove that the Spirit does regenerate men independently of the truth.

The fact, that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things spoken of by Paul, is supposed to prove that the Spirit does regenerate men independently of all truth. According to this fact, the Lord opened her heart before she heard the truth delivered by Paul, and the opening of her heart is supposed to be regeneration. But this is not certain. The Lord may, by his providence, open the eyes of unrenewed persons, so far as to induce them to attend upon the means of grace with

some degree of earnestness. Besides, in opening Lydia's heart, the Lord may have used truths that she had previously received. The knowledge of one truth may prepare the heart for receiving others. There is no reason to believe that Lydia did not previously understand some truth. The argument then drawn from this fact, although plausible, is not well founded. The fact does not prove, that the Spirit regenerates any independently of the truth. Nor does it seem reasonable, that the Scriptures should support such a doctrine. Man, in regeneration, comes to God, and "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But can he believe these without truth? In regeneration love to God is produced—but how could love be produced to a being not known to exist? Man is regenerated as a rational being, and not, as a mere machine, changed by mere physical power. The Spirit, doubtless, exercises a moral influence to which truth is essential. The Savior said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Regeneration is the entrance upon eternal life, which consists in knowing the Father and the Son.

The truth on this subject has been well expressed by the Westminster Assembly. They maintained that the "Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the

word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners, of driving them out of themselves and drawing them unto Christ, of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will." According to this, the Spirit of God makes the word an **EFFECTUAL MEANS** of **ENLIGHTENING, CONVINCING, and HUMBLING SINNERS**, not persons previously renewed, not christians, but **SINNERS**. The word is made an **EFFECTUAL MEANS** of **DRIVING SINNERS OUT** of **THEMSELVES** and **DRAWING THEM** unto **CHRIST**, of **CONFORMING THEM** to **HIS IMAGE**, and **SUBDUING THEM** to **HIS WILL**. How can **SINNERS** be **EFFECTUALLY** enlightened, convinced, humbled, driven out of themselves, drawn to Christ, conformed to his image, and subdued to his will, but by regenerating them? It is by regenerating operations that these things are accomplished for sinners. What but regenerating a sinner can drive him out of himself? What else can conform him to the image of Christ? And what else can subdue him to Christ's will? There is not the least reason to doubt that the Westminster Assembly meant, that the Spirit of God makes the word an effectual means of regenerating sinners, for they enumerated the things done in regeneration. To regenerate a sinner is to drive him out of himself, draw him to Christ, conform him to his image, and subdue him to

his will. But does the Bible sustain the assembly in this opinion? It is expressly said, as already quoted, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." That is, he regenerated us with the word of truth. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit—being born again;" that is, "through the Spirit, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible—BY THE WORD of God." 1 Pet. i. 22, 23. This shows that regeneration is effected through the agency of the Spirit, by the word.

"This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Heb. viii. 10. That is, God will regenerate Israel, by putting his laws into their mind and writing them in their hearts. When God regenerates persons, he becomes their God, and they become his people. The Spirit renews the sinner by writing the truth in his heart.

Sanctification is a continued "renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is as certainly a work of the Spirit, as regeneration. Christians are as dependent upon the operations of the Spirit for sanctification, as sinners are for regeneration. Christians we know are sanctified through the truth. John xvii. 17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Now, if the



truth is instrumental in sanctification, why not so in regeneration, which is but the commencement of sanctification? The language of Scripture with respect to each, is similar. "Sanctify them through thy truth." "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." Thus, the instrumentality of the word is asserted alike, in respect to sanctification and regeneration. Both are equally effected by the Spirit, through the truth. It is true, that regeneration is often attributed to the agency of the Spirit, without any notice of the instrumentality of the truth; but in no place is such instrumentality denied, and in some places it is affirmed. The fact that it is not always noticed, is no proof against its actual existence.

How the Spirit does so impress the truth upon the heart, as to produce in it a radical and permanent change, or even to sanctify it, is beyond our comprehension. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The fact is revealed, that the Lord does put his law into the mind, and write it upon the heart, and the Savior has said, that the Spirit "shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you." John xvi. 14. And we ought to believe, although we cannot comprehend how these things can be done. The intercourse between spirits is, to us, incomprehensible. It is clearly revealed,

that the Spirit puts the truth into the mind and writes it upon the heart, and that he himself also enters into those he regenerates and dwells in them. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose, that he carries the truth with him when he enters the souls of those he renews. The question, then, asked by some, does the word come between the Spirit and the soul? seems to be out of place. The Spirit is immense in pervading every thing; consequently, no instrument, that he is pleased to use, can come between him and the thing upon which it is used, as is the case with the instruments of material beings. No instrumentality can intercept the direct agency of the Spirit.

From what has been said, it is abundantly evident, that regeneration is effected by the special agency of the Spirit, through the instrumentality of the truth. This should lead us to adore the Spirit, to earnestly seek his sanctifying influences, and to feel grateful to him for his merciful visitations to us, while we were enemies to God, unthankful, and unholy.

If any of us are on the way to heaven, it is by his special grace. On his agency depends every hope of salvation. Sinners should beware of vexing, resisting or grieving him away, lest he depart for ever, and they perish with aggravated condemnation.

We should also highly value divine truth. God has been pleased to make it essential to our salvation. It is a lamp to light up our way

to heaven—it can make us wise unto eternal life. With what interest and delight should we study the sacred oracles, that we may see the sun of righteousness rising, with glorious effulgence, to dispel the moral darkness of our world.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SPIRIT DOES NOT PERFECT SANCTIFICATION UNTIL DEATH.

THE Westminster assembly asserted, that “No mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed.”

This assertion means that no mere man, by any assistance he receives from the word and Spirit of God, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God. The point denied is, that men, under the existing system of grace, have ability to be sinlessly perfect in this life. There is, according to it, an inability in fallen men, which prevents absolute perfection in the present state.

It is not denied that men, since the fall, have all the faculties necessary to sinless perfection. It is not asserted, that the inability lies in the want of physical powers. Man will, no doubt, have the same natural faculties in heaven that he has on earth. Nor is it denied,

that it is the duty of all to be sinlessly perfect. Man's obligation is measured by the extent of his natural faculties, without regard to the moral state of his heart. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke x. 27. This shows that man is bound to love God to the full extent of his natural faculties, and beyond this nothing is required. Loving God thus is the fulfilling of the law. The being that does this is sinlessly perfect. And that it is the duty of all rational beings thus to love God, cannot be denied. It is then admitted that man has all the natural faculties necessary to sinless perfection, for the law requires nothing beyond the natural capacity. It is not said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with more than all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind. It is also admitted to be the duty of every one to be sinlessly perfect, and that all true christians will, at death, be made entirely perfect. The simple point then asserted is, that there is some kind of inability attached to our fallen state, that does prevent all and every one from being sinlessly perfect in this life. The difference in regard to perfection is with respect to the time when true believers become perfect, and not with respect to the fact that they all will finally become perfect. Let us then enquire,

1st. Whether the Scriptures present any facts, of mere men, since the fall, being sinless-

ly perfect. Job is one of the fairest examples presented in the sacred oracles. Job i. 1: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." This is as strong language as is used with respect to any mere human being mentioned in the sacred volume. And it is but candid to admit, that at first view the passage does impress upon the mind, the idea of sinless perfection. But other parts of Job's history show, that although compared with other men, he might properly be called a perfect man; that is, as perfect as any of the race become in this life, yet it is evident that he was not sinlessly perfect. When a man is to considerable extent matured in piety he may, in comparison with others, be called a perfect man. It is admitted, that in this sense the Scriptures speak of perfect persons. There are babes in Christ, and there are men and women in Christ, persons of full stature. Such are perfect christians: they "are complete in" Christ. They are perfect after their kind, as perfect as christians generally become in this life. In this sense Job "was a perfect man, and upright." But had he been sinlessly perfect, he would not have cursed the day of his birth, Job iii. 1—10. If he had been sinlessly perfect, the Lord would not have reprov'd him. Job xl. 1, 2: "The Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct *him*?" Job con-

fessed his sin, and said, "Behold, I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth thee : wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." Job xl. 4, and xlii. 5, 6. Thus we have abundant evidence that Job was not sinlessly perfect. Had he been entirely holy, he would have had no reason to abhor himself, nor to "REPENT in dust and ashes."

Zacharias and Elizabeth, it is said, "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Luke i. 6. Yet they were not sinlessly perfect. Zacharias was guilty of unbelief, and was punished for it with dumbness for a season, Luke i. 18—20. They were righteous before God in a comparative sense, and blameless before men, but the corruption of their nature was not entirely removed, else there would have been no tendency to unbelief in the heart of Zacharias.

It is reasonable to suppose, that if any samples of sinless perfection were to be found on sacred record, the apostles would be such. They had the fairest opportunity of making the highest attainments in holiness. They were taught by Him who spake as never man spake. The teaching they received was the most perfect possible, and it was enforced by an absolutely perfect example. In addition to

**this, the Holy Spirit was sent to bring all that they had been taught to their recollection. And if God intended to make christians sinlessly perfect, there was a peculiar necessity that the founders of the new dispensation should themselves have presented a perfect example. If sinless perfection is to be found in the christian church we must expect to find it in the apostles. But no one, who attentively reads the New Testament, can fail to receive the impression, that the apostles were far from sinless perfection. Peter, a man of the most ardent piety among them, and one who preached with the most signal success, not only denied his Lord, but afterwards was guilty of dissembling; and the pious Barnabas was drawn away with his dissimulation and that of others. Gall. ii. 11—14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For, before that, certain came from James, he did eat with the gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter, before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the gentiles to live as do the Jews?"**

Here we have an exhibition of what human nature is, even in its most sanctified state on earth. Few, if any, have excelled Peter and Barnabas in piety, in suffering, and labor in the cause of Christ, yet they gave painful evidence of indwelling corruption. They were far from being sinlessly perfect.

Paul was pre-eminent in christian attainment, and yet he denied that he was perfect. Phil. iii. 12: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Rom. vii. 18. And these statements are verified by the fact, that he entered into a sharp contention with his brother Barnabas, merely because Barnabas had determined to take John Mark with them. Acts xv. 31—39: "The contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder." Was it no sin to contend with a brother about a small matter, and even to separation? And Paul was manifestly in the wrong—he evidenced towards Mark an unforgiving temper.

It is abundantly evident, that the best of the apostles were not sinlessly perfect, nor can it be proved, that any mere man in this life, since the fall, has been entirely sanctified. From the fact that the apostles, who had more immediate access to God than any since, were not sinlessly perfect, it is reasonable to conclude that the Lord did not intend to make this life a state of sinless perfection.



2. Let us enquire whether there are any passages of Scripture that prove that any are made sinlessly perfect in this life.

A variety of passages have been introduced to prove the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life, some of which it is now proper to notice. Rom. viii. 3, 4, has been supposed to sustain this doctrine: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It is admitted that the righteousness of the law means the obedience of the law, for the righteousness of the law consists in obedience. God, by making his Son a sin-offering, condemned sin in the flesh. Sin in the flesh, then, is as a criminal condemned to die; but the text does not say how soon it shall die. The righteousness of the law is to be fulfilled in us, but how soon the passage does not determine. Our old man is crucified, and, of course, is to die a lingering death. Christ's death procured the influences of the Spirit, by which sinners are regenerated and gradually sanctified throughout life, and made perfect at death; and his righteousness justifies them from all sin. Hence, all the demands of the law are met, and its righteousness will ultimately be fulfilled in all true believers. The passage proves nothing more

than the justification, and the consequent final sanctification of those united to Christ. It does not prove sinless perfection in this life. It is admitted that Christ died to accomplish the entire sanctification of his people; but it is contended that it is a work to be carried on throughout life, and that the future is the perfect state, this the preparatory one.

Another passage supposed to prove sinless perfection, is 1 Peter ii. 24: "Who his own self bore our sins, in his own body, on the tree, that we being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness." Every one in regeneration begins to die unto sin and live unto righteousness, and as the work of sanctification progresses he dies more and more unto sin, and lives more and more unto righteousness. At death he dies perfectly unto sin, and lives perfectly unto righteousness. This is all the passage proves. It does not specify the time when we become dead, but asserts only, that Christ bore our sins, that we might become dead to sin and live unto righteousness. If we become perfect at death, Christ has not failed to accomplish the end for which he died.

2 Cor. v. 15, deserves some notice: "And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." Every one that is born again does live unto Christ. In the new birth he begins to live unto Christ, and throughout life he becomes more and more de-

voted to him, and at death he becomes perfectly conformed to his image, and then lives unto him perfectly for ever. This is all that the passage proves. Christ died to accomplish finally the entire perfection of his people.

2 Pet. i. 4, is supposed to sustain the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, through lust." The great and precious promises tendered in the gospel, are, to sinners, the means of sanctification. When any one is regenerated, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature—he is born in the image of God—he passes out of the world into the kingdom of Christ, and thus escapes "the corruption that is in the world through lust." And as he becomes more sanctified by the word and Spirit, he becomes more and more a partaker of the divine nature, and more and more escapes from the corruption that is in the world. Nothing is asserted in the text but what is true of every regenerated person. Every such person is a partaker of the divine nature, and is in a state which secures him from being overcome and destroyed by the corruptions of the world. The passage, then, does not prove that any attain to sinless perfection in this life.

2 Cor. vii. 1, also claims notice: "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us

cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." This passage teaches that Paul and his brethren, although regenerated persons, were not yet cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and that they had not yet become perfect in holiness, else there would have been no need of the exhortation. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Inasmuch, then, as they had filthiness of the flesh and spirit still remaining in them, it should be the business of their lives to cleanse themselves, and thus continue to perfect holiness in the fear of God. And to this, the promises of the gospel should encourage them. Final victory was promised—the prize was held up at the end of the race. They should "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Hence, the passage contains no proof that any attain to sinless perfection in this life.

It is said, that "perfection in holiness is promised the christian in the new covenant," mentioned in Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, and in Heb. viii. 8—11. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day *that* I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke,

although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this *shall* be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more, every man his neighbor, saying, know the Lord, for they all shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." In Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27, is a similar promise: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." In Deut. xxx. 6, is language equally strong: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live." And these blessings are to be perpetual. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40: "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away

from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me." Such are the promises of the new covenant, and these, some believe, promise to christians sinless perfection in this life, or in other words, promise that they shall be absolutely perfect in holiness in the present state. That the new covenant does promise, that christians shall attain sinless perfection, must be admitted; but how soon they shall attain it, is not stated. If it promises sinless perfection to one true christian it does to all, and that for ever, and that not on their own account—not for any thing they have done or can do. Ezek. xxxvi. 32: "Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you." Whatever the perfection be, it is promised without regard to previous good works, or improvement of grace given, and equally to all the subjects of the covenant, and equally at all times. It is perpetual, "forever." If, then, the covenant does promise sinless perfection in this life to any, it does to all true believers, and that, from the time of regeneration to the end of life and during eternity. They are not to depart from God, but to fear him forever. If any of the true subjects of the covenant fail, at any time, of being sinlessly perfect in the present state, all may—no distinction is made in the covenant. They shall all have one heart and one way, and shall all fear God forever. If the heart of one be sinlessly perfect in this life,

so shall the hearts of all be, and that perpetually; and if the heart of one be imperfect, so shall the hearts of all be; for they shall have one heart and one way. The apostles had one heart and one way, and we know that it was not a sinlessly perfect heart, nor a sinlessly perfect way. Both their heart and way were sinfully imperfect, yet they were true subjects of the new covenant, and in them were its promises fulfilled as fully as they will be in any others. They were, doubtless, a true sample of what God intended to make christians in this life. They were regenerated persons; they believed and practiced the gospel, but not perfectly; they were kept by the power of God in a state of grace during life; at death they were made sinlessly perfect. In life they had one heart, and one way in the love and service of God, but they did not love and serve him to the extent the divine law required; still they feared God and did not depart from him—they were kept from final apostasy by the power of God,—at the end of their course they were made sinlessly perfect, and entered upon everlasting enjoyment. Thus, the true meaning of the new covenant is established by fact, and, certainly, this is the safest method of interpretation. The new covenant, then, does not promise that any shall be sinlessly perfect in this life.

Still it is urged that we are commanded under the new covenant to be perfect.

The Savior said to his disciples, "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matth. v. 48. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace." 2 Cor. xii. 11. These commands imply, that the persons addressed were not yet perfect. The disciples and Corinthians were not commanded to continue to be perfect, but to *become* perfect. To become perfect was to be the business of their lives.

They must continue to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. iii. 18. They must stop at no point short of sinless perfection. They were running the christian race; the mark was at the end of it, and they should press toward the mark—the prize was held up at the end of the race for their encouragement. They would finally gain perfection, both in holiness and happiness. They were commanded to do just what was their duty, and duty which they were striving, amidst counteracting corruptions, to perform, and which they would finally accomplish, when they would come to see the Savior as he is in the world of glory. Such commands do not prove that any do perfectly obey them in this life. That it is the duty of all to strive to be perfect, is admitted; the only point of controversy, is with respect to the time when christians become perfect. If it requires entire life to overcome the old man,



and perfect the new man, the commands to be perfect are just as appropriate as they would be if it required less time to obey them; consequently, they do not prove that any becomes sinlessly perfect in this life. Every effort which a christian makes to be holy, is an effort to become perfect, and, consequently, an effort to obey the command, "Be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect." The christian is to spend the entire labor of his life in obeying this command, and will ultimately succeed.

It is said, that we are taught to pray for sinless perfection in this life; and can we suppose that we are taught to pray for what we know will not be granted. This is, by far, the most plausible argument advanced to prove the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life, and the most difficult to answer.

A sample, it is said, of such, is given in 1 Thes. v. 23, 24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I *pray God* your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

The Lord had called the Thessalonians from a state of nature to a state of grace—he had begun to sanctify them, but had not completed the work—they were not yet wholly sanctified, and the apostle prayed that the Lord would finish his work, that is, that he would continue to

sanctify them until they should be made perfect, but how soon he does not say, that he left with the Lord to decide. He asked that which was in accordance with the revealed will of the Lord, and paid due deference to his secret purposes. It belonged to the Lord to determine how soon he would perfectly sanctify and take the Thessalonians to heaven. Whenever persons are wholly sanctified, they are fit for heaven. The apostle, then, prayed that the Thessalonians might be fitted for heaven, and be preserved, while in a state of preparation, as matured christians, blameless in the sight of men, as were Zacharias and Elizabeth, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the apostles trusted that the Lord, who had called them, would do it. If Paul prayed that the Thessalonians might be sinlessly perfect in this life, his prayer was not answered. There is no more reason to believe that this church was wholly sanctified, than any other apostolic church. There is no ground to believe that Paul asked any thing more for it than he did for other churches. And we have painful evidence that the apostolic churches in general were far, some of them very far from sinless perfection. Whatever Paul prayed for, the faithfulness of God required to be done. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Now if the faithfulness of God required *him* to make one church sinlessly perfect in this life, it equally required him to make all others such. "If we

confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John i. 9. Every one who truly confesses his sins is united to Christ, and so the faithfulness and justice of God requires that his sins should be forgiven, and also that he should be cleansed from all unrighteousness, or in other words, that he should be sanctified "wholly." The Thessalonians were united to Christ, and, therefore, the faithfulness of God required that they should be cleansed "from all unrighteousness." Hence, whatever the faithfulness of God, in this respect, requires for one true believer, it does for all. The faithfulness and justice of God require the entire sanctification of all who are united to Christ by regeneration, for all such do confess their sins. Consequently, if the faithfulness of God required him to sanctify the Thessalonians wholly in this life, it required him to do the same with respect to all other true christians.

But it may be said, that Paul prayed in faith, and faithfulness to God's promise to hear the prayer of faith, required that his prayer should be answered.

To this is replied, that the prayer of faith is always offered in deference to the secret will of God. The Savior thus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*." And again he said, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I

drink it, thy will be done." This is a true sample of the prayer of faith. The cup did not pass away, and yet the prayer of the Savior was answered, for he prayed that his father's will might be done—he did not desire that the cup should pass away contrary to his father's secret will. And thus are all prayers of faith offered, and they are all answered. To pray without deference to the secret will of God, is practically to presume that we are more wise and benevolent than Deity himself. Paul besought the Lord thrice, that the thorn in his flesh, the messenger of Satan, might depart from him; but it was not the Lord's secret will that it should depart, and it did not depart. 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. The Lord knew what was best, and Paul rejoiced in the infirmity that the Lord had sent upon him.

God's promises to his people do not conflict with the exercise of his sovereignty. He, in all cases, gives, as a sovereign, just what he pleases, when he pleases, and as much or as little as he pleases. If, then, Paul did pray that the Thessalonians might be wholly sanctified in this life, the faithfulness of God did not any more require him thus to sanctify them, than it did to remove the cup of suffering from the Savior, or the messenger of Satan from the apostle, when thrice besought to do it. Consequently, this prayer contains no proof that the Thessalonians, were wholly sanctified in this life, and, of course, does not prove

that any in this life do attain to perfect holiness.

The Savior taught his disciples to pray: "Thy will be done in earth as *it is* in heaven." Matth. vi. 10. The revealed will of God must be intended, for his secret will is done alike in earth and heaven. In heaven there is perfect obedience to God, and, of course, perfect holiness, and we are to pray that the same may be in earth, that God's rational creatures in this world may be just as obedient and holy as they are in heaven. In view of this, it is asked, why are we taught to pray for absolute and universal perfection on earth, when there is no reason to believe that God intends that such perfection shall exist in the present state? That this presents a difficulty is readily admitted; but difficulties are not proof that the position is false. Suppose one should deny that the Savior prayed that the cup of suffering might pass from him, and urge as proof that the Savior knew that the plan of salvation was established from eternity, and that the cup could not pass away from him—and why would he pray for a thing that could not be granted? There is an equal difficulty; but it does not prove that the Savior did not pray that the cup might pass from him. The difficulty, then, is admitted; but that it proves that earth will become as holy a place as heaven is denied.

Prayer is an expression of the desire of the heart. It is the duty of the rational inhabitants

of the earth to be as holy as those of heaven. and it is right in itself to desire that they should be what they ought to be. It is in itself desirable that earth should be as holy a place as heaven; therefore, it is right to desire that it should be so, just as it was right for innocent human nature of the Savior to desire to avoid suffering, and be happy: and if it be right to entertain such desire, it is right to express it to God in prayer, although the object of it may not be granted. The petition, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," is an expression of benevolent desire, and also of the highest love to God; his will is so good that it is desirable it should be done in earth as perfectly as in heaven. It is obvious that the feeling and expressing of such a desire is calculated to better our hearts. And perhaps the petition was intended to be a strong method of expressing our love to holiness. The true believer so loves holiness that he desires to see it extended to every rational being on earth.

Again, it is the duty of christians to labor to make the world as holy as they can. There is no point short of entire perfection at which they may cease their exertions, consequently, their prayers should be in accordance with their labors. If they are not to cease their labors at any given point short of the entire perfection of the world, why should they limit their prayers? It is impossible for us to know the precise degree of holiness to which God

intends to bring the world. God commands "all men to repent." Acts xi. 30. Yet all men do not repent, and must we on that account cease to labor and pray for the conversion of all men? Our prayers can be limited by nothing short of what the world ought to be. We are to labor and pray to make it what the law of God requires it to be, although the fountains of depravity may be so deep and wide as to prevent our final success. There is, then, some good reason why we should pray, "thy will be done in earth as *it is* in heaven," although earth never may become so holy a place as heaven. The fact, then, that it is our duty to pray for this, does not prove that it will ever take place. Consequently, the petition, "thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," does not prove that sinless perfection will exist in this life.

There is yet another passage that claims notice. It is 1 John iii. 9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

If this means that every one that is born of God is sinlessly perfect, it also means that every such one is infallibly perfect, for "he cannot sin." Such meaning makes the text contradict palpable facts. The Scriptures charge sin upon Moses and David, Zacharias and Peter, and upon many of the very best of the saints. Consequently, the text cannot mean

that no one does sin in any sense after he is born of God, but that he cannot so apostatise from him as to make sin the business of his life—he cannot again become God's enemy and sin as the unregenerate do, who delight in sin, and make sinning the business of their lives. The seed of divine truth is planted in his heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and continually tends to reclaim him when drawn away by temptation.

The passage, then, does not prove that any one become sinlessly perfect in this life. From what has been said, it appears that the sacred volume presents neither facts nor passages to prove that any, in this life, become perfect in holiness.

3. The Scriptures furnish ample evidence that no such perfection is attained in this life. According to the oracles, there is in our fallen nature an inability of some kind that does make regeneration, and a progressive work of sanctification, indispensable to salvation. This inability does not consist in the want of natural faculties, for the law requires nothing more than to love God with all our natural powers. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Then, nothing is required beyond the limit of the natural faculties; but all these are so perverted, by apostasy from God, that the sinner does not perceive that God



is lovely. The soul is so corrupted that unrenewed men do not see the loveliness of the divine character, and, therefore, cannot love God, because to them there is nothing lovely in him. Every sinner has broken loose from God's throne, and loves himself supremely, and sees no loveliness in any thing else farther than it tends to self gratification. Man was originally constituted to love God supremely, and every thing else, as it tended to exhibit the loveliness of the divine character; but by the fall, the original and holy propensities of his nature were turned out of their natural channel. Hence, all that ardent love which man originally placed upon God, he now bestows upon himself; and that affection which he bestowed upon the creatures of God, as they tended to unfold the loveliness of the divine character, he now gives to the objects of self gratification. Thus man, in his fallen state, loves himself and the objects of self gratification, as ardently as he did God and his creatures in a state of innocency. This forms the bondage of sin. As man is in supreme love with himself, he is at supreme enmity with God. Hence, it is said, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7. Man's inability, then, lies in supreme love to himself, and the consequent enmity against God. He is pleased with his condition, and the eloquence of an angel could not persuade him to change it. He

loves to be what he is; consequently, there is no tendency in him to displace his affections from himself, and place them upon God, in whom he sees no loveliness. Hence, he is represented as being "dead in trespasses and sins." 2 Eph. i. 5. There is no more tendency in a sinner, unless moved by the word and spirit of God, to love the divine character, than there is in a dead body to arise from the grave and perform the functions of life. If a sinner be let alone, he will just as certainly remain in his sins, as a dead body, let alone, will remain in the grave.

Every propensity of man in his fallen state is turned against God and holiness. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart (*is*) only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. There is in him no tendency to turn from his sin. He sees nothing lovely in God and holiness. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. His love of sin is such as perverts his spiritual vision. Hence, he cannot see the loveliness, even of infinite excellence. Such is the deep rooted depravity of the heart, that the stupendous miracles and eloquence of the Son of God failed to convert men. There is, then, an inability in the sinner's supreme love to himself, and consequent supreme enmity to God, that does make regeneration indispensable to his

loving God and holiness. Hence, the Savior said, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3. And "no man can come to me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him." John vi. 44. It is on the ground of this inability that sinners are said to be lost. "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." And, "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The minds of those who are lost, that is, who are in the unrenewed state, have a blindness that prevents the light of the gospel from entering into their hearts, to illuminate and make them wise unto salvation. The blindness is such, that "except a man be born again he cannot SEE the kingdom of God." No man, then, in his natural state, is able to see the kingdom of God, much less to enter into it and keep the commandments of God perfectly.

In regeneration there is a partial deliverance from this blindness; an imperfect view of the loveliness of the divine character is given, and love to God does, to some extent, prevail in the heart. The new man, it is true, is formed in all his parts, but in infantile weakness. He is a babe in Christ, feeble, and easily overcome by the power of temptation. At first faith is weak, but gradually grows stronger, as spiritu-

al nourishment is given to the new creature. Regeneration is the gift of God, and faith, in all its degrees, is also his gift; and, it must be admitted, that he has power to make, in an instant, a soul as absolutely perfect as that of a saint in heaven, and he could impart faith so strong as to give all the realities of heavenly vision; but it is not his plan to operate in this way: he gives just so much as he pleases—he first forms the infant, and then displays his kindness, wisdom, and power in bringing it up to maturity. The fact, then, that God does not make his people sinlessly perfect in regeneration, is proof that he does not choose to do it. And there is the same reason that he should permit them to remain imperfect throughout life, that there is, that he should suffer them to be so at first. The sinner is dependent upon God for regeneration, and the saint is equally so for sanctification. Hence, the Savior prayed, “sanctify them through thy truth;” and he said to his disciples, “without me ye can do nothing.” There is, then, still an inability remaining after regeneration, and such as makes the christian dependent upon God for every advance he makes in holiness. He is “kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.” 1 Pet. i. 5. Such as have no inability can keep themselves, and do not need God’s keeping. So far would the christian be from making advances in holiness of himself, that if he were not kept by the power of God, he

would all the time be falling back into sin. It is the power of God that continues him in his renewed state. Every prayer which a christian offers for himself, implies this inability. What propriety is there in asking God to give us new hearts, to create within us right spirits, to sanctify us, to increase our faith, if there be, in no sense, any inability in us? If christians be able, in every sense, to keep the commandments of God perfectly, surely all such prayers are folly in the extreme. Why should Paul pray God to sanctify the Thessalonians wholly, if they were fully competent to do the work themselves? Every such petition offered on behalf of christians is evidence that there is some sense in which they are not able perfectly to keep the commandments of God. The inability of christians to do even what they would is asserted. Gall. v. 11: "The flesh lusteth (desireth) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The desires of the Spirit are opposed to those of the flesh, or remaining corruptions of nature, and, consequently, a strong internal contest for dominion arises, and prevents christians from doing what they, upon the whole, desire to do.

A similar view is given in Romans vii. 14—25:

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

“For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

“If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good.

“Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.

“For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

“Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

“I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

“For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man:

“But I see another law, in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.”

That this is the experience of Paul as a christian is evident from the fact, that it accords with what he represents to be the experience of other christians, “Ye cannot do the things

that ye would." Gal. v. 17. And of himself he says, "How to perform that which is good, I find not."

He had just stated what he was, and now states what he is. He, as a sinner, was alive without the law—he died, and now, as a christian, he feels the bondage of sin. So strong are his remaining corruptions, that he is still like one sold into bondage, "I am carnally sold under sin." Such is the real condition of every christian; his remaining corruption is so strong, that he has to be kept every moment "by the power of God," or he would plunge into the utmost depths of sin. He is so carnal, so completely sold under sin, that nothing but the power of God can keep him from falling perpetually under its dominion. Few have excelled David in living and ardent piety, and yet, when left to his own strength, how horrible were the crimes he committed. How ardent and devoted was Peter when "kept by the power of God;" but when that power was suspended a moment, he denied his Lord, and cursed and swore, as if he had at once become a devil. Either David or Peter might, with the utmost truth, have said, "I am carnal, sold under sin." And the man that thinks himself better than either David or Peter, would do well to receive the following advice, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Did not David and Peter do that which they allowed not? Did they not

do the evil they hated? Were not their gross sins striking evidences, that in their flesh, or corrupt nature, dwelt no good thing? Did they not find a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, bringing them into captivity to the law of sin? And could not each of them say, "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man?" And could not each of them say, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" David could say, "how love I thy law?" and yet there was in him such a body of death as suddenly drew him into the most shocking sins. Peter did that which, a short time before, he said he would sooner die than do. "Though I should die with thee, yet will not I deny thee." Yet such was the corruption of his nature, that he did deny his Lord, and even cursed and swore. Such facts were, no doubt, recorded to show us what man is, even in his best state on earth. No one goes any farther in the way of holiness than he is moved by the Holy Spirit. Phil. ii. 13: "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure." This accords with Paul's experience: "I am carnal, sold under sin." So was he in bondage to sin, that he was unable of himself either to will or to do any thing good. Facts, then, and inspired statements show that there is in the christian, after he has been regenerated, such a tendency to sin, as renders him unable to keep the command-



ments of God perfectly. This inability lies in the corruption of the soul, not in the want of natural faculties. It does not destroy accountability, which is founded in the physical powers of the soul, without respect to the state of the heart.

In view of what has been said, it must be admitted, that such is the corruption remaining in the christian, that he cannot, of himself, perfectly keep the commandments of God. If, then, he becomes sinlessly perfect, it must be by divine agency. But it has been shown, that there is no evidence that God intends to make men sinlessly perfect in this life. The present appears to be the preparatory state, and heaven the perfect one. The divine plan makes knowledge necessary to holiness. To grow in holiness it is necessary to grow in knowledge. The Savior prayed, "sanctify them through thy truth;" that is, through knowledge. And, "we all, with (or in) open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18. Christians in the open face of Christ see the glory of the Lord as in a glass, and by seeing it are changed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, as they increase in holiness. By faith christians see Christ, and in him the glory of God, and by looking at him their hearts become more and more transformed into his im-

age, as faith increases. Throughout life faith grows stronger, and the view of Christ becomes clearer, and the state of sanctification higher, until, at death, they see Christ as he is, and at once become perfectly transformed into his image. Hence, John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall SEE HIM AS HE IS." 1 John iii. 2. John presents the fact, that we shall all see him as he is, as evidence that we shall be like him. Seeing Christ as he is, will transform us, by the power of the Spirit, into his perfect image. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. There is not, in the present state, that clearness of vision which is necessary to absolute perfection in holiness. On earth we must live by faith—"The just shall live by faith." By faith God purifies our hearts, and enables us to overcome the world. Acts xv. 9, 1 John v. 4. By faith we see as through a glass darkly—by it we know but in part. At the end of our race it will be turned into actual vision, then shall we be perfectly like Christ, "for we shall see him as he is." Hence, Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I *do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 12—14. Thus Paul compares himself to one running a race. The mark is at the end of the race; so soon as the mark is reached the prize is gained. If sinless perfection be either the mark or the prize, it is at the end of the race. And surely no one can suppose any stopping point short of such perfection. It is the business of the christian's life to become perfect in holiness. The work of sanctification is to progress from the moment of regeneration to the end of life. At death he enters upon a perfect state. It is not death that makes the christian perfect; it is seeing Christ as he is. Thus the children of God are to pass from one degree of glory to another, until in putting off the body they enter upon the perfect light of eternal day.

That no one is sinlessly perfect in this life, is evident from the fact, that we are taught daily to pray for the forgiveness of sin. Matt. vi. 11, 12: Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." That is, and this day forgive us our sins. Now if a person be sinlessly perfect he cannot say, this day forgive us our sins. All his former sins are forgiven, and he being sinlessly perfect has none now to forgive. The Lord's prayer

is, at least, to be used so long as a man eats bread or takes food, and just so long the Savior supposes he will need the continued forgiveness of sin. He is to ask forgiveness just so long as he asks bread. The Lord's prayer, then, is founded upon the fact, that none are sinlessly perfect in this life.

John teaches the same doctrine when he says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John i. 8. The sins of all perfect persons are pardoned and taken away. The saints in glory have now no sin, and can truly say, we have no sin. If any on earth have become sinlessly perfect, it is equally true of them, they have no sin, and can say with as much truth as the redeemed in heaven, we have no sin. But, according to John, if any on earth say, we have no sin, they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them; for all have sin. "There is none righteous, no, not one."

It is positively asserted in the sacred oracles, "*there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.*" Eccl. vii. 20. This is an absolute denial of sinless perfection. There is not on earth a just man, so perfectly just as to live without sinning. If a man were sinlessly perfect but a single hour, or even a moment, he would do some good without sinning. But, according to this inspired declaration, there is not a JUST man who does good without sinning. The "righteousnesses of" the very best

on earth are mixed with sin, and, therefore, are but "filthy rags." Solomon, while praying at the dedication of the temple, said, with respect to God's people, "if they sin against thee; for there is no man that sinneth not." 1 Kings viii. 46. That is, there is no man that becomes so perfect as not to sin. The passage means nothing less than this, and, therefore, is an entire denial of sinless perfection in the present state. It is true, then, that no mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but "doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed."

When we consider what is implied in sinless perfection, it is marvelous that any reflecting mind should believe that it exists in this life. It implies perfect humility—every vestige of pride must be removed. It implies perfect diligence to know our duty in every respect. We must know it perfectly, according to the means and natural faculties God has given us. There must be no indolence relative to searching after the will of God. It implies perfect temperance in the exercise of all our appetites, propensities and passions; not merely according to what we do now, but according to all that we had the natural faculties and means of knowing. If we speak a word too much when we might have known what was right, or omit to speak a word in season, it is sin. How much to eat and how much to sleep, how much to la-

bor and how much to rest, how much to love our neighbor and how much to love our wives and children, must be known to the extent of our capability. Benevolence to our neighbor must be so perfect, that we will ever regard his person and interests as fully as we do our own. Sinless perfection implies, that we labor and contribute at all times as much as we ought to do for the temporal and eternal happiness of all men. It also implies that we not only love God, but that we love him at all times with as much ardor as the law requires, that we are fully as grateful to him as we ought to be; that we are perfectly diligent in his service, that our prayers are just as fervent as circumstances at all times require, and that our faith and confidence are so strong as the divine testimony and the excellency of God's character demand. To the extent of our natural capacity, we must abstain from every thing wrong, and do every thing right, and in its proper time; in short, every thought, word, and action must, at every moment, be in perfect accordance with the divine law. All these things are necessary to sinless perfection. Now who that duly reflects upon our fallen state, the inordinate demands made upon us by appetites, propensities, and passions, the more than ten thousand temptations to which we are hourly exposed, can suppose that any one, in the present life, becomes so holy as not to fail in a single point, amidst so vast a number of liabilities? Surely the man

who believes this, must either reduce down the divine law to meet our sinful infirmities, as intelligent men did, who formerly believed the doctrine of sinless perfection, or they must take a very summary view of it, and forget that the "commandment is exceedingly broad." Psal. cxix. 96. It is extremely difficult to conceive, how one truly acquainted with the vast extent of the divine law, and the pride and deceitfulness of his own heart, can believe that any become sinlessly perfect in this life. The most eminent saints that ever lived have continually confessed their sins. When ever lived a fairer character than Daniel, who, rather than omit his duty, chose to be thrown into the den of lions? and yet how long and how deep was his confession of sin! Dan. ix. 3—20. This holy man, in sackcloth and ashes, with confusion of face, confessed before God his own sins and the sins of his people. The man that is sinlessly perfect is far in the advance of Moses, and Aaron, and David, and Daniel, and Peter, and Paul, and Barnabas, and all the host of martyrs who have died confessing their sinfulness. The more holy persons become, the more clearly they discover the extent of the divine law, and the sinfulness of their own hearts, while in the present state. Hence, the most holy men have uttered the most complaint about the sinfulness of their own hearts, and have been the farthest from supposing themselves perfect in holiness. Deep and thorough

confession of sin, in individuals and churches, is one of the best evidences of advancing piety, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The confession of sin is continually a christian duty, and one that tends to humble us before God, and to cultivate humility in our hearts. The opinion that the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life tends to promote holiness, is not well founded. The pride of our hearts renders such a doctrine dangerous. Were we perfect as the saints in heaven, and, of course, free from all spiritual pride, such doctrine would do us no harm; but while pride remains in our hearts, it will tend to increase it. While it has no tendency to make us more holy, it has direct and powerful tendency to increase our spiritual pride, and cause us to fall into the condemnation of the devil. It tends to flatter, not to humble proud human nature.

The fact of making christians believe that they may become sinlessly perfect in this life, will never raise higher the standard of piety in the churches. Is it the fact, that sinners expect to become perfect adepts in sin in this life, that induces them to pursue it with so much intensity? Not at all; they sin because they love to sin. They serve the devil because they love his service; and all true christians serve God, not because they expect to become sinlessly perfect in this life, but because they love



his service. They love holiness "after the inward man," and, therefore, strive to obtain so much of it as they can. The ardent seeker of wealth does not labor incessantly day and night because he knows the precise amount that he can gain, but because he loves wealth, and determines to gain so much as he can. Just so with the christian, he loves holiness, and he trusts through the grace of God he can gain some, and determines to gain as much as he can in this life, and believes that at the end of his earthly race he will gain perfection. "Blessed are *they* which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matth. v. 6. Unless professors of religion can be brought to hunger and thirst after righteousness, the standard of piety in the churches can never be raised higher than it is. If the hungry man cannot obtain so much food as will satisfy his appetite, he will labor to obtain so much as he can. Just so with the christian; he hungers and thirsts after holiness, and labors to gain all he can.

Love to God and man is that which prompts to christian action. Let us labor to have this implanted and cultivated in the hearts of men, so far as practicable, and in proportion to our success, will the standard of piety arise higher in the churches.

## CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST WAS SO SUBSTITUTED FOR HIS PEOPLE AS TO MAKE FOR THEM A REAL ATONEMENT, AND THUS PROCURED THE INFLUENCES OF THE SPIRIT, AND ALL THINGS ELSE NECESSARY TO THEIR SALVATION.

1. THE mere fact that Christ suffered, proves that there was some indispensable necessity for it in saving men. And what necessity could there be, unless justice required it? And if justice required any thing, it required the full penalty of the law. On the principle that God could dispense with a part of the penalty, he could with the whole. If it would be unjust to omit the whole penalty, it would be so to omit any part of it. If God could have pardoned and saved men without exacting the penalty of the law, surely he would have spared his own beloved Son. If justice did not require his sufferings, there was no indispensable need for them. The fact that he suffered is proof that justice required it, and if justice required any suffering, it required the full penalty of the law. Some assert that the penalty of the law was death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and that Christ did not suffer these, and, of course, did not suffer the penalty of the law. To this it is replied, that death, temporal, spiritual and eternal, were the mode in which it pleased God to inflict the penalty, rather than the penalty

itself. Suffering was the penalty, and justice did not require that Christ should suffer it in the same mode in which it is inflicted upon the sinner; and he, having divinity to support his humanity, was able to suffer, in a limited space of time, all that the law demanded.

2. Justice requires the protection of the innocent. Christ was innocent, and yet the fact that he suffered exists. If justice did not require his suffering as the substitute for his people, he suffered unjustly, and justice has failed to protect the innocent. And if the innocent may suffer in the government of God, then where is the reward of innocence, or the punishment of the wicked? How shall we distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, in respect to reward? Christ is the only fact of a perfectly holy being suffering, that can be presented in the government of God,—justice has protected all others; and why this exception, in one more lovely and more beloved than all others? There was no ground on which he could suffer consistently with justice, unless on that of his being the voluntary substitute for his people.

3. It is expressly said, that he was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.” Gall. iv. 4, 5. What necessity could there be for his being made under the law, in order to redeem his people, unless it were to obey it, and suffer its penalty in their stead? The fact, then, that he

was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, and actually suffered under the law, is proof that he suffered in the stead of his people, and made a real atonement.

4. It is clearly asserted that our sins were laid upon him, Isa. liii. 6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Iniquity is not a material substance that can be moved from one place to another. Sin consists in unholy exercises, or, in other words, it "is the transgression of the law." The exercises of one being cannot be so transferred to another as to become his own, and render him personally criminal. Hence, there is no other sense in which our sins could be laid on Christ, than that of the punishment due on account of them being laid on him. It is difficult to conceive how any candid person can, in view of this passage, doubt that Christ was really a substitute for his people. The punishment due on account of their iniquity was laid on him.

5. It is declared that he suffered for our sins. Isa. liii. 5: "He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." What can this mean, if he did not suffer the punishment due to us for our sins? In what other sense could he suffer for our sins? What is the chastisement of our peace, but the pun-

ishment due to us on account of our sins? This chastisement or punishment, necessary to our peace, was upon him. He endured the stripes due to us for sin, and therefore, "by his stripes we are healed." There is no other sense in which we could be healed by his stripes. The prophet also affirms, that "for the transgression of my people was he stricken." Isaiah liii. 8. And Peter declares that he "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." 1 Pet. iii. 18. It is impossible that the substitution of Christ for his people could be expressed in stronger language. He suffered for the sins of the unjust, the just suffered in the stead of the unjust. The passage can mean nothing less than that he suffered the punishment due to the unjust on account of their sins. Peter also affirms that "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet. ii. 24. In what sense could he bear our sins in his own body on the tree, but that of bearing the punishment due to us on account of our sins? He bare our sins just as if they had been his own. Some, to escape the force of this passage allege that the original means, that "his own self took away our sins in his own body on the tree." Let it be so. In what sense could he take away our sins in his own body on the tree, if not by suffering the punishment due to us on account of them? It could not be by merely procuring our sanctification; for sanctifying us prevents us from sinning, but does not take

away sins already committed. It is not said that he sanctified us in his own body on the tree; but that he took away our sins in his own body on the tree. The passage speaks of sins as already committed. There is no sense in which he could take away our sins in his own body on the tree, but that of bearing, in our stead, the punishment due to us on account of them, and thus releasing us from enduring it ourselves.

6. Paul affirms that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gall. iii. 13. Every one that was hung on a tree was cursed, that is, was condemned for his crime. The curse, or sentence of the law, was denounced against him; and he, under this curse, was hung on a tree as a criminal. Christ redeemed us from the sentence, or curse of the law, by receiving in our stead the curse, or sentence of the law upon himself. The passage can mean nothing less than that he took upon himself the curse or sentence of the law that was upon us, and endured it for us, and thus redeemed us from it.

7. The sufferings of Christ were extraordinary. He suffered directly by the hand of his Father. Isaiah liii. 10: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and he hath put him to grief." He made "his soul an offering for sin;" and consequently, he took pleasure in bruising the

Son he loved infinitely well. It pleased, or as the word means, delighted the Lord to bruise him; and he hath put him to grief. What could induce the Lord to take pleasure in bruising and putting to grief his own infinitely beloved Son, unless absolute justice required of the Son, as the voluntary substitute for his people, the punishment due to them on account of their sins? In what other sense could the Lord make his soul an offering for sin?

Our Lord himself viewed the cup of suffering as coming directly from his Father. Hence he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." And when Pilate said to him, "I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee," he replied, "Thou couldst have no power *at all* against me except it were given thee from above." There is, then, undeniable evidence that the Father did bruise his own Son. His agony in the garden is unaccountable upon any other ground. There was no visible hand to afflict him, and yet his "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," "and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What but the weight of our sins could produce such agony of Spirit? To suppose that the sufferings of the Savior were ordinary, is to sink him, in respect to fortitude and patience under suffering, far below the martyrs, many of whom rejoiced and triumphed in the midst of burning fires. But what are

earthly fires compared with those kindled up by the Almighty in the holy soul of the Son of God, when suffering the wrath due to sinners. It is no wonder he cried, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this pass from me." No inflictions by the hands of men could extort from his lips a single complaint. They crowned him with thorns, they scourged him with cruel whips, they nailed him to the cross with rugged nails, and yet, "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." But when the Father withdrew from him, "he cried with a loud voice—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This shows that his sufferings were extraordinary. Why did the Father withdraw from him at this most trying moment? Surely if ever there were circumstances in which a father would pity and deliver, if possible, an innocent son, these were such; and yet the Father, who loved his Son infinitely more than any earthly father loves a son, instead of delivering him, inflicted on him the deepest anguish of spirit, by withdrawing from him his supporting presence. It is impossible to account for this on any other ground than that the Father really "made his soul an offering for sin," in the stead of his people. There is no room to doubt, the Son did suffer all that the law demanded. O how amazing is the love of the Father to men in delivering up his own Son to endure in their stead the penalty of the broken



law! And how stupendous are the love and condescension of the Son in stooping from the throne of heaven to assume our nature, and bear in our stead the wrath of God!

From what has been said it is as evident as truth can be, that Christ suffered in the stead of his people, whatever justice demanded. But suffering alone was insufficient to repair the injury done by the apostasy of man. The design of annexing a penalty to a law is not that of securing the sufferings of those who violate it, but that of securing obedience. The grand design of all righteous laws, is that of promoting the happiness and not the misery of those governed. Both truth and justice require the infliction of the penalty when a just law is violated, yet the suffering of the penalty does not repair the injury done. This may be easily illustrated. For instance, when a murderer dies for his crime, he does not repair the injury done to the government. There is manifest loss sustained. Two citizens are taken away, both of whom should have supported the government. Could the murderer, after having suffered the penalty, return to life, restore to life the individual murdered, and make reparation for all suffered and lost, then, and not till then, could he be considered a good citizen. Hence, after the murderer has suffered for his crime, infamy is heaped on his name, and his body is buried at the foot of the gallows; because he is still viewed as one who has injur-

ed civil society. The penalty annexed to the divine law was designed to secure obedience, and the consequent happiness of God's rational creatures, and not to secure misery. Hence, the suffering of the penalty does not answer the place of obedience, and, of course, does not alone repair the injury done by disobeying the law. Consequently, the Lord declares that he has no pleasure in the suffering of the penalty. Ezk. xxxiii. 11: "*As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.*" Had the Lord received the penalty alone, he would have received that in which he, as a benevolent being, can have no pleasure. Thus it is obvious, that to save sinners, the penalty of the violated law must be endured by one who had perfectly obeyed the law in his own person. Under the former dispensation, the typical atonements were made by sacrificing the more innocent kinds of animals. These were types of him "*who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.*" "*Such a High Priest became us.*" Heb. vii. 26. The holiness and innocence of Christ were indispensably necessary to his making atonement for sin. For this reason, no doubt, his holiness and harmlessness are so clearly stated in the Scriptures. He was placed under the severest tests of obedience. He was tempted with bread after having fasted forty days and forty nights, and, of course, was pressed with extreme hunger. He was tempted on the pin-

acle of the temple, and on the mountain. He was tried beyond measure in the garden and on the cross.

During all these temptations and trials, he rendered perfect submission to his Father's will, and thus conferred more honor upon the law, than could have been done by all the mere creatures in the universe. He thus fulfilled the prediction, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make *it* honorable." Isaiah xlii. 21. Under agonies immense, and the hidings of his Father's face, he obeyed the law. Under such circumstances, all the mere creature strength of the universe must have failed, and the agonies of the second death must have fastened upon all God's rational creation. The obedience of Adam and his posterity, had they all obeyed perfectly, could never have conferred so much honor upon the law, as was conferred upon it by the obedience of the Son of God. The atonement, then, was made by the sacrifice of him who conferred infinite honor upon the law, and therefore, no limit can be set to its value. It is in itself sufficient for the whole world of Adam's race; and were that race to be extended ten thousand times beyond the limits God has set for it, the sacrifice of Christ would still be sufficient for the whole. The sacrifice of Christ is not only sufficient in itself for the whole world, but it is also suitable for all our race; and if all were united to him, he could save

them all as easily as save one; and on the ground of its sufficiency and suitableness, it is offered to all, wherever the gospel is preached. 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' Mark xvi. 15. The call extended to sinners is not founded upon the fact, that the sacrifice was made for every individual, but upon the ground that it is sufficient and suitable for every individual. That it is sufficient, suitable and freely offered, is all the sinner needs to know in order to receive it. Is it any matter of interest to a hungry man, when sufficient and suitable food is freely offered to him, whether it was prepared for him, or for some one else? Will it not satisfy his hunger just as well without his knowing whether it was prepared for him or for some other person, and may it not be as sincerely offered to him, when prepared for another, as if it had been prepared for himself? For instance, when a neighbor steps in while a family are sitting down to eat, and is invited to partake with them; the invitation is not founded upon the fact that the food was prepared for him, but on the ground that it is sufficient and suitable for him; and is not the invitation just as sincere as it could have been if the food had been prepared for him? Unless the sinner can be brought to feel his need of Christ, tell him what you may, he will reject him; but let the sinner be made to feel his need of salvation, and to know that Christ "is able to save them to the

uttermost that come unto God by him," and also that he is freely offered to him; and the sinner will receive Christ as certainly as a hungry man will receive food. It is not, then, as some suppose, telling the sinner that Christ died for him, that induces him to receive Christ, but his being made to feel his need of Christ, and to know that Christ is offered to him with the full assurance that if he receives Christ, he shall be saved. Then, in preaching the gospel, we should endeavor to convince sinners of their need of Christ, and to show them that the atonement of Christ is sufficient and suitable for them, and that it is sincerely offered to them. These facts the Scriptures clearly teach, and they should be constantly urged upon sinners.

The Scriptures teach us that Christ died for the church. Eph. v. 25—27: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Acts xx. 28: "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The facts stated in these passages must be true. Christ did give himself for the church, and did purchase it with his own blood. He died for the children God had given him, and these children were the seed of Abraham. Heb. ii.

13—17: Christ said, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily, he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but took on *him* the seed of Abraham. Wherefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." This passage shows that Christ died for his children—he, for their sake, partook of flesh and blood, and died to destroy the devil, and deliver them. He took not hold of angels, for so the passage should have been translated, but he took hold of the seed of Abraham; and because he took hold of the seed of Abraham to save them, in all things it behooved him to be made unto his brethren the seed of Abraham. As true christians are born of the Spirit unto Christ, they are his children; and as he and they are both the children of Abraham, they are his brethren. The passage clearly shows that Christ died for the seed of Abraham, and the church is the seed of Abraham; therefore, he died for the church. Christ said, John x. 15: "I lay down my life for the sheep." The church consists of Christ's

sheep; hence, he died for it. It is unnecessary to multiply passages when the fact is so plainly stated. A great many others might be brought to prove that Christ died for the church; but if any deny it in the face of the positive and unequivocal assertions of the sacred oracles now presented, it would be in vain to labor further for the benefit of such. The fact must be admitted by all who regard the authority of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures also teach that Christ died for the world. John i. 29: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John iii. 17. "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only; but also for *the sins of the whole world.*" 1 John ii. 2. According to these passages, and a great many others that might be presented, it is an undeniable fact that Christ died for the world. Thus we have two undeniable facts; one, that Christ died for the church, the other, that he died for the world. He died to cleanse the church, and died to take away the sin of the world, to save the world, and to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The very same thing is done for the world that is done for the church. It is by faith in his blood that he is the propitiation. Rom. iii. 25: God set him forth "*to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.*" Ac-

According to this, it is by faith in his blood that he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The text implies that the whole world, as a body, will be brought to believe in Christ. And this is just what the prophets teach. Abraham is "the heir of the world." The whole world is to become his family. The heathen are to be given to Christ "for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Hence, the church and the world are ultimately to become one body. Christ stands now the great High Priest, taking away the sin of the world, so far as the world is regenerated and brought into the church; and when the world, as a body, shall have been regenerated and brought into the church, Christ will then be literally the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world; he will be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and by him the world, as a body, shall be saved. Thus, it is literally true that Christ died both for the church and the world. He saves both in the same sense; both classes of Scriptures mean the same thing. The world is saved by becoming the church. This interpretation accords with facts. It is a fact that the church and the world are to become one body; and it is a fact that Christ takes away the sins of none but of those who believe in him: he propitiates for none but such—he saves none but such.

To interpret the passages that speak of



Christ dying to save the world, to mean that he died in the same sense for every individual of our race, and, of course, to save every individual, is to make the Scriptures contradict facts. Every individual has not been saved. And it is to make Christ die for the sins of men after they were in hell; for he suffered "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament." Heb. ix. 15. His people under the former dispensation were saved on the credit of Christ. He died for their sins, and, of course, if he died in the same sense for the sins of every individual that existed during that dispensation, he died for the sins of those who were in perdition at the time he suffered. This seems exceedingly improbable. 'The Savior said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me." John xii. 32. If this be interpreted to mean every individual of our race, it will contradict fact. It is not true that every individual has not been drawn to Christ. According to fact, the assertion can mean nothing more than that he would draw the mass of men to him,—the world as a body. Every interpretation of Scripture that contradicts fact, is false. The passage just presented, goes as far to prove that Christ died in the same sense for every individual of our race, as any other.

There is a more extended sense, in which Christ died for the world, than the one presented in the passages considered. Had it not been

for the interposition of Christ, justice would have prohibited the bestowment of every blessing, temporal or spiritual. By one sudden stroke of justice, the race must have been cut off. Hence, a Savior was provided before man fell, to save him from dropping at once into hell, as did apostate angels. On the same principle, that God could bestow any favor without Christ, he could bestow any amount of favor, and even eternal salvation, without him. Temporal blessings could, no more than spiritual blessings, be bestowed without a Savior. Consequently, the operation of the plan of salvation required that the race should be put under a dispensation of grace. Not merely must the execution of justice be suspended, but temporal blessings must be bestowed, so far as to secure the existence of those to be saved. In this sense, the plan of salvation secured blessings for the entire race, and the death of Christ was intended to procure these blessings. In this respect, he tasted "death for every man." "He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. v. 15. In this passage there is an accurate distinction made. He died for all—not that all should actually live, but that they which do live, should not henceforth live unto themselves. He died for all—because all were alike dead, and one main object of his dying was, that they who live by regeneration might live unto him who

died for their offences, and rose again for their justification. Hence, Christ "is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10. There is, then, a sense in which Christ did die for the entire race, and there is a sense in which all the families of the earth are literally blessed in Christ, the seed of Abraham.

From what has been said, it is evident that the sacrifice of Christ was made to save both the world and the church, because both are ultimately to become one body, and also that it was made to procure the blessings necessary to the existence of our race. The execution of justice was suspended by it, and the entire race placed under a dispensation of mercy. These facts easily explain all the seemingly variant passages in relation to the death of Christ. The interpretation is fairly an induction from facts that do and, according to prophecy, will exist.

The view now presented, while it easily harmonizes passages of Scripture that seem to vary, has all the advantages, in respect to extending the institutions of the gospel, that any other can have. Every individual is invited, with the positive assurance, that if he believes he shall be saved. No device of man can save any more than those that believe, nor is it proper to use any means beyond what God has appointed to induce men to believe. We should faithfully present the truth as it is, and prayerfully commit the case to him who is able to save. False representations of the gospel tend

to fill up the churches with false professors, and not with genuine converts.

From the facts presented it must be obvious, that the influences of the Spirit, and every other blessing necessary to the salvation of Christ's people, were procured by his obedience and sufferings. It has been shown, that justice, without a Savior, would forbid all favors, both temporal and spiritual. Consequently, the Spirit, and all other blessings, must be the purchase of the Savior's obedience and death. Christ said to his disciples, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." John xvi. 7. Under the former dispensation the Spirit was given on the credit of Christ, and now the time had come when he must satisfy the demands of justice, and, therefore, if he go not away by the bloody death of the cross, the Comforter will not come unto his people. It is admitted, that the Spirit is the gift of God; but then it is a gift that justice would have prohibited, had not the Savior satisfied its demands. The Spirit, then, and all other blessings, are bestowed at infinite expense. How greatly does this enhance the grace of God! How great is our debt of gratitude to the Father, Son, and Spirit! "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

## CHAPTER IX.

## CHRIST'S PEOPLE ARE JUSTIFIED BY HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THAT Christ's people are justified by righteousness is a fact clearly stated in the Scriptures, consequently, one of two things is inevitably true, either that they are justified by his righteousness, or, that they are justified by their own righteousness. If justified by their own righteousness, which consists in obedience to the law, they are justified by the deeds of the law; but Paul declares that "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Rom. iii. 20. According to James, we are justified in the sight of men, as to the genuineness of our profession by works; but according to Paul, no man can be justified in the sight of God by the deeds of the law, that is, by works. Then, although men may justify us by works, yet God will not justify us by them. "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." To this it may be replied, that Christ's people are justified by faith, and neither by his righteousness nor their own; but simply by the act of believing being reckoned to them for righteousness, as "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Rom. iv. 3. It is said "the reason why it was counted to him for righteousness was, that it was such a strong,

direct, and unwavering act of confidence in the promise of God." If this means any thing, it means that so strong an act of confidence in God merited justification. This strong confidence in God was so meritorious an act, that it was counted to Abraham for righteousness. If the strength of the act was the REASON why it was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, the act itself was the righteousness, and Abraham was justified by his own righteousness, or merits. And yet this same writer affirms, that "If Abraham was justified on the ground of his own merits, he would have reason to boast, or to claim praise. He might regard himself as the author of it, and take the praise to himself."\* It is strange that so excellent a writer should make so palpable a contradiction in so small a compass. Abraham's act of believing was as truly his own exercise as his loving God, or his neighbor, or any thing else, and was as much a deed of the law as any other exercise could be. And, of course, if this act of believing was alone counted to Abraham for righteousness, then he was justified by the law, and Paul's argument, drawn from Abraham's justification, was against his own assertion, that "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." The law as certainly requires us to believe God as it does to obey him. The same writer

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\* Barnes on Rom. iv.

affirms that the word "IT," here, 'evidently refers to the ACT of believing. It does not refer to the righteousness of another, of God; or of the Messiah. If this be true, then all Christians are justified by Abraham's act of believing; for Paul affirms that it was not written for Abraham's "sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom IT shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." The same IT is imputed to us that was imputed to Abraham. If the act of believing justifies us, how was Christ raised for our justification? That it was not Abraham's act of believing that was counted to him for righteousness, is evident from the fact, that it is contrary to the purpose for which Paul introduced the passages. In the preceding chapter he denied justification by the deeds, that is, by the righteousness of the law, and asserted justification by the righteousness of God. Rom. iii. 20—31: "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.—But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested; even the righteousness of God, *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the re-

mission of sins—to declare, *I say*, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Seeing *it is* one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.”

By the deeds or righteousness of the law, no flesh shall be justified; but the righteousness of God is manifested for justification. This righteousness is, by faith in Christ, “unto all, and upon all them that believe,” that is, by faith we receive this righteousness which is for the remission of sins. We are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; that is, through what Christ has done for us through his righteousness. This righteousness was necessary that God might be just, and the justifier of those that believe in Christ. The passage shows clearly that there is a righteousness distinct from the act of believing, that it is received by faith, and is unto all, and upon all that believe. In what sense could the act of believing be said to be “unto all, and upon all them that believe?” When Paul says that we are justified by faith, he must either mean that believing is a meritorious act that so atones for our sins, that God can justify us, or that it is the instrument by which we receive a justifying righteousness. He does not mean that we are justified by be-



believing as a meritorious act, for that would be justification by the deeds of the law, and therefore, he must mean that by believing we receive Christ's righteousness for justification. That he does mean this is evident, from the fact that he asserts that "we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Rom. v. 2.

The continuation of the apostle's argument proves that we are justified by Christ's righteousness, and not by the act of believing. He expressly asserts that we are "justified by his blood." Rom. v. 9. He also asserts that "by the righteousness of one *the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life,*" that is, all men in Christ; for none but those in him are justified. And, "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 18, 19. These several expressions occur in the apostle's argument to establish justification by faith. Three times over he affirms justification by Christ, "by his blood," by his "righteousness," and by his "obedience." By these several expressions the same thing is meant. As his blood was indispensable to salvation, it is used to express all that Christ did for us; righteousness and obedience are the same, each means all that Christ did for us in procuring justification.

During the same discussion, Paul charges the Jews with "being ignorant of God's right-

eousness ; and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And he affirms that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. x. 3, 4. The end, object, or design of the law is obedience. Christ is the end, or obedience of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. That is, Christ has obeyed the law for every one that believes. This shows clearly what Paul means by the righteousness of God. Christ is the righteousness of God to every one that believes. He has satisfied the demands of the law in the stead of those that believe ; and, therefore, is to them the obedience of the law for righteousness : Christ, then, and not the act of believing, is the righteousness of God to believers.

Paul teaches the same doctrine to the Philippians. Phil. iii. 8, 9 : "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Here is a righteousness that is not faith, not of the law, and one that Paul desired to possess, a righteousness that comes upon us through faith in Christ, and one which is of God by faith. Thus, it is obvious that faith is the means by which we receive a justifying righteousness, and it is in this sense that Paul

teaches justification by faith. Christ's righteousness is the righteousness that God has provided for our justification ; and, therefore, it is properly called God's righteousness.

It is proper to add, that Paul asserts expressly that Christ is of God, made unto us righteousness. 1 Cor. i. 30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto wisdom, and righteousness." How is he made unto us righteousness? Paul answers, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *saying*, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Rom. iv. 6—8. The word *impute* signifies, charge, or account. Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth, or chargeth righteousness. God charges righteousness upon believers without works ; but faith is a work, and therefore faith, as an exercise, cannot be the righteousness charged to the believer. When Paul says faith is counted for righteousness, he must mean faith connected with the righteousness of Christ ; for in one place he affirms that Christ is made unto us righteousness, and in another that righteousness is imputed, or charged, to us without works. Does he charge to believers a righteousness, when, in fact, there is none—they have none of their own? Either Christ's righteousness is charg-

ed to them or none. Their faith in Christ is counted to them for righteousness; that is, Christ is, by faith, made righteousness to them. Their iniquities are forgiven for Christ's sake, their sins are covered by his righteousness; the Lord will not impute sin to them, because Christ has taken away their sin. It is a fact that all are sinners; how then could God as a just judge avoid charging sin to them unless their sins were taken away by Christ's righteousness? What propriety could there be in Christ's suffering for us if his sufferings are not charged to us? It is asserted that God "hath made him *to be* sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. Now in what sense could we be made the righteousness of God in him, unless the righteousness of God be imputed to us, or in some way be made ours? The assertion is exceedingly strong; Christ is declared to be made sin itself for us, that we might be made righteousness itself,— "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." As Adam's disobedience or unrighteousness condemned him and all his posterity, so the obedience, or righteousness of Christ, justifies him and all his posterity. Believers are Christ's children. He is the representative of his people; he and they constitute but one body, as the vine and its branches

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are one; as the head and the different members of the human body constitute but one body; or as the husband and wife are one flesh, he and his people are one flesh. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Eph. v. 30. Thus the strongest figures are used to express the unity of Christ and his people,—“By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.” This one body, through Christ the acting head, has fulfilled the demands of the law; he has obeyed it, and suffered its penalty in the stead of his members. His resurrection was his justification as the representative of his people; it was a declaration that justice was satisfied; hence it is said, “he was raised again for our justification.” We are justified by being united to a justified head. What Christ did and suffered constitutes one righteousness that covers the whole body. It remains with the head, and is imputed to the members for justification as fully as if they had wrought it out themselves. This does not imply that Christ's personal acts are so transferred as to become the personal acts of his people. Christ's righteousness is not transferred from himself, but his members are justified by being put into him so as to become a part of his body. What has been done by the head justifies the whole body; it is imputed to the members for justification as fully as if they had done it themselves. They are treated as

if they had perfectly obeyed the law in their own persons. The value of Christ's righteousness is unlimited, and, of course, the body never can be so extended as to exhaust its merits. It will justify a large body just as easily as a small one, and yet there is in it nothing superfluous. It will do no more than justify the body. None can be justified without union with Christ, and "he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him." It is then a precious truth that Christ "is the Lord our righteousness." There is "now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." They may joyfully exclaim, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

Let none say that, if Christ paid the debt due to justice, the justification is not of grace, but of debt. It is of debt to Christ, and the Father has promised that "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." "If we confess our sins" God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Faithfulness and justice to Christ require him to pardon and sanctify all that truly confess their sin. Christ has paid the debt, and justice owes it to him to save all united to him. But to us it is all grace, and

that at infinite expense. God provided the Savior, and not we, "he spared not his own Son; but freely delivered him up for us all." He that is the mighty God assumed our nature, and endured for us agonies unknown! O how stupendous the grace! Salvation to God and the Lamb for ever.

**THE END.**

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